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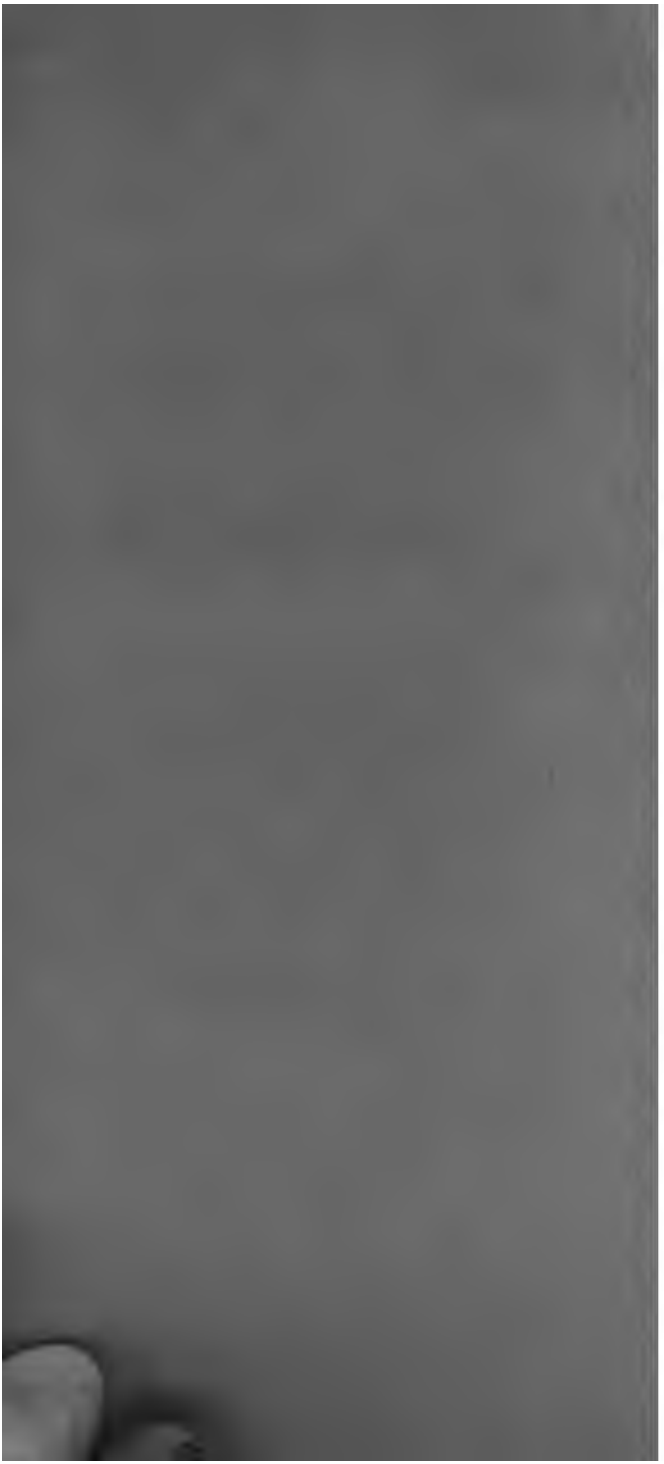

Middleton

ZEP

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THE

MISCELLANEOUS

WORKS

Of the late REVEREND and LEARNED

CONYERS MIDDLETON, D.D.

Principal Librarian of the Univerſity of *Cambridge*.

In FIVE VOLUMES.

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REMARKS

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ON

TWO PAMPHLETS

Lately publiſhed againſt

Dr. *Middleton's Introductory Diſcourſe.*

The ONE, intituled,

OBSERVATIONS on that DISCOURSE, in anſwer to the Author's Prejudices, *&c.*

The OTHER,

The JESUIT-CABAL farther opened,

OR

A Defence of Dr. *Chapman's* late Charge, *&c.*

With a PREFACE to theſe REMARKS,

Giving a brief Account of a certain Book, which profeſſes to exhibit a full, true, and comprehenſive View of CHRISTIANITY, *&c.*

As it was taught and practiſed by the Univerſal Church, during the firſt Four CENTURIES.

With ſome occaſional Reflections on the ſaid Book.

PRÆFACE.

I Have lately met with a certain book, which, though written without any reference to Dr. *Middleton's Introductory Diſcourſe*, and with a view quite oppoſite to it, is yet ſo particularly connected with the ſubject of it, and conſequently, with the preſent debate, which is grounded upon it, that I have thought it neceſſary, on this occaſion, to give the reader a ſhort abſtract of it, as a proper preface or introduction to the following remarks.

The purpoſe of it, as it is declared by the Title-page, is, "To give a true and compre-"henſive view of Chriſtianity: or to ſet forth "the complete duty of a Chriſtian, in relation "to faith, practice, worſhip, and rituals, with-"out regard to any modern Church, Sect, or "Party; as it is taught in the holy Scriptures, "was delivered by the Apoſtles, and received "by the univerſal Church of Chriſt during *the* "*firſt four centuries.* The whole laid down in "two Catechiſms; the firſt, for the uſe of "Children; the ſecond, of more knowing "Chriſtians."

Now when a controverſy was actually on foot, concerning the principles and characters of the primitive Fathers; and a quæſtion moved among Divines, whether they were the moſt favorable to the Popiſh or to the Proteſtant cauſe, nothing could come out more appoſite to the purpoſe, or more effectual towards the deciſion of it, than a performance of this kind; ſetting forth by a deduction of facts and inſtances, what were the genuin doctrines and practices of thoſe antient Fathers, during *the four firſt centuries* of the Chriſtian Church. This book therefore I would recommend to the attention of the reader: For this will inable him to judge, of the real merit of *the Introductory Diſcourſe*, which has been attacked and decried by ſeveral writers, and eſpecially by theſe two, with whom I am now engaged.

The Author of theſe Catechiſms, appears to be a man of ſenſe and learning; warmly perſuaded of the truth and importance of what he delivers; and delivering it with much piety and gravity, and with more candor, than we commonly obſerve in writers of his zeal and principles. The plan alſo of Chriſtianity, which he has propoſed to us, ſeems to be a fair and juſt repreſentation of the diſcipline of the primitive Church, or of ſuch a part at leaſt, as he thinks fit to recommend to the practice of the preſent age. And if we grant him his main principle,

principle, that *unwritten tradition*, as it is exemplified by the univerſal practice of the ancient Fathers and Churches, is of *Apoſtolic Origin*, we muſt grant likewiſe, that all the rites and doctrines, which he has deduced from it, are the eſſential parts of the Chriſtian religion, and of equal obligation with the Goſpel itſelf. Yet on the whole, this learned, candid, and pious performance will be found, upon examination, to confirm every thing, that Dr. *Middleton* has any where ſaid, concerning the danger of adopting the diſcipline of thoſe primitive ages, as a pattern or rule of duty to Proteſtants.

His ſcheme in general is this: that true religion conſiſts, in believing and practiſing every thing, which God has revealed to us, either *by his written word or unwritten tradition; both which are known to be God's word by the evidence of the Catholic Church* [1]. He declares tradition to be, *that ſacred depoſitum of doctrine and practice, which was delivered by Chriſt to the Apoſtles; by the Apoſtles to the firſt Biſhops; and by them, to their ſucceſſors and Prieſts, of the univerſal Church, from age to age* [2]. *That all* points of doctrine and diſcipline, which were *anciently and univerſally received by Chriſtians, without any known beginning, have always been looked upon as Apoſtolic traditions:* that *this conſentient practice of the Catholic Church, is the teſt, by which true traditions are diſtinguiſhed from falſe* [3], that theſe

[1] P. 151. [2] 142. [3] 152.

traditions may be called *the common law of the Church*; and the decrees of councils, *it's ſtatute law:* and that no Church can be rightly conſtituted, *which does not obſerve them, or has any laws contradictory to them* [1].

He defines the Church to be, *the Society of all the faithful, who profeſs to ſerve God, according to that true religion, which God himſelf taught, and which they received from their fore-fathers, and have faithfully preſerved without alteration:* that the marks of the true Church are four; it is *one*, *holy*, *Catholic*, and *Apoſtolic*; preſerving the doctrine of the Apoſtles, by a continued ſucceſſion of Paſtors, derived originally from them [2]. Which ſucceſſion we know to have

[1] P. 191, 192.

[2] 161, 162. Theſe are the ſame marks of the true Church, which the Papiſts have always alledged againſt the Proteſtants, as being found in their Church, and not in any Proteſtant Church. Thus in a ſhort treatiſe on this very ſubject, publiſhed by an able Popiſh writer, in the beginning of Q. *Elizabeth's* reign, and when the ſettlement of religion was under the deliberation of the parliament, the author concludes his argument in theſe words: "To be ſhort, the "Church of Proteſtants is "not *One*, for lack of one "head: not *Holy*, for lack "of benefits: not *Catholic*, "becauſe it hath not indured "at all times, places, and "perſons: not *Apoſtolic*, be-"cauſe they cannot ſhew "their ſucceſſion from the A-"poſtles downward, nor can "go upward lineally to the "Apoſtles, which thing is "plain. Therefore the Church "called Papiſtical, having "one head, the Pope, hav-"ing benefits of God, by "floriſhing, and miracles, "being ſpread at all times, "in all places, through all "perſons, that is to ſay, for been

been *uninterrupted, from the times of the Apoſtles down to the preſent* [1]: that if it *ſhould ever once fail, it would be impoſſible to renew it, without the miraculous interpoſition of Chriſt himſelf: for if the whole Chriſtian world ſhould unite their ſuffrages together, they could not give any authority, to offer the ſacrifice of the Euchariſt, or to perform any other part of the paſtoral office in the Church, it being a power which Chriſt has reſerved to himſelf* [2].

That this univerſal Church, as it is now militant on earth, is made up of all the particular faithful Churches, of each of which the Biſhop is the viſible head. *That a particular faithful Church conſiſts of a rightful Biſhop, with his Clergy and laity united to him, profeſſing the true faith, without the addition of falſe doctrine, and practiſing the neceſſary Chriſtian worſhip, without corruption.* Hence flows the neceſſity of living and dying in the communion of the Church, out of which ſalvation is not ordinarily to be had. For we cannot be united to Chriſt, *without communicating with the holy Catholic Church, and the onely means of communicating with the Catholic Church, is, by being members of a particular faithful Church* [3].

" the moſt part, being able " to ſhew their pedigree, even " to the Apoſtles, without " any interruption; that " Church, I ſay, is the onely " true Church, whereof we " make mention in our Be- " lief, ſaying, I believe the " Holy Catholic Church." See *Strype's* Annals of Q. *Eliz.* Append. p. 36.

[1] P. 151.

[2] 282.

[3] 162.

To this general view of his primary and fundamental principles, I ſhall now add a ſummary account of the chief articles of that pure and primitive Chriſtianity, which he has built upon them.

To begin then with the ſacraments. In the office of Baptiſm, he preſcribes, as neceſſary to the due adminiſtration of it, all the ſame ceremonies, which are now actually practiſed by the *Romiſh* Church, though with ſome little alteration, or the addition rather of more foppery and ſuperſtition, than is to be found even in the Popiſh ritual. The perſon, to be baptiſed, muſt in the firſt place be *exorciſed* by the Prieſt, by *blowing thrice upon his face, ſigning him with the ſign of the Croſs, and pronouncing a certain form of authoritative words, commanding the Devil to depart out of him.* He next makes a *ſolemn renunciation of the Devil; and a vow of perpetual obedience to Chriſt:* in which renunciation, *he muſt turn his face to the Weſt, as being oppoſite to the region of light, and repreſenting the Prince of darkneſs, whom he renounces:* but in making his vow to Chriſt, he muſt *turn again to the Eaſt, where Paradiſe was planted, which is now again laid open to him:* then he muſt be *anointed on the head and ſhoulders with holy oil, conſecrated for that purpoſe by the Biſhop,* to inable him to wreſtle the more ſucceſsfully with the Devil: then he is to be *plunged three times under water;*

onc'

once at the name of each perſon of the bleſſed Trinity; to repreſent the faith into which he is baptized; and alſo the three days burial of Chriſt, and his reſurrection on the third day; with ſeveral other myſtical ſenſes, there ſpecified: after this, he muſt be anointed again with *holy Chriſm*, or a compound of oil and balm, conſecrated by the Biſhop; and is to be cloathed *with a white garment*, the emblem of that purity to which he has devoted his life: then he receives *the kiſs of peace*, in token of his incorporation into the Church: and laſtly is made to taſte *of conſecrated milk and honey*, to denote his ſpiritual infancy, and his entrance into the land of reſt, of *which Canaan, the land of promiſe, flowing with milk and honey, was a type* [1].

As to the Euchariſt, the *true and full notion of it*, he ſays, is this; that it is *a religious feaſt upon bread, and wine mixed with water, which have firſt been offered in ſacrifice to God, and are become the myſterious body and blood of Chriſt* [2]. He affirms it to be, a *real and proper ſacrifice*; and calls ſacrifice in general, the moſt *perfect, efficacious*, and *honorable ſervice*, that we can pay to God [3]; and the particular ſacrifice of the Euchariſt, *the moſt excellent worſhip, which God ever preſcribed to men* [4]: which by its *purgative and expiatory nature procures a general remiſſion of ſin for the whole Church, and attones like-*

[1] P. 227, &c. 232. [2] P. 240. [3] P. 250.
[4] P. 240, 279.

wiſe for the wilful tranſgreſſions of particular ſinners: of which ſacrifice, Chriſt, at the time of the inſtitution, *conſecrated his Apoſtles to be the Prieſts*, with a power of conſecrating others to ſucceed them, and carry on the ſame Prieſthood to the end of the world [1].

The ſacramental part of the Euchariſt, *is the Feaſt upon this ſacrifice of the body and blood of Chriſt; which being offered to God upon the Altar by the Prieſt, is conſumed afterwards in common by the Prieſt and People by eating and drinking; for it was made too holy a thing by its conſecration, to be treated as the ancient ſacrifices were, or to be laid on the fire in whole or in part, but was to be conſumed intirely, in the moſt honorable manner, that is, to be eaten and drunk by the faithful, in an act of moſt ſolemn devotion.* He declares, *that as Chriſt, by the words of the inſtitution, made the bread and the cup to be his body and blood, in type and figure, ſo God, by his acceptance of this moſt excellent ſacrifice, cauſed the Holy Spirit to give it the higheſt degree of ſanctity, of which any ſacrifice is capable, and to make it the very body and blood of Chriſt, in real power and energy, and to all intents and purpoſes of religion, or as far as it was poſſible for one thing to be made another, without changing the ſubſtance.* And this he ſays, *was the certain and univerſal belief of the Ancients, that as the natural body of Chriſt was formed in the womb of the*

[1] P. 267, 268, 270.

bleſſed

bleſſed Virgin, by the overſhadowing of the Holy Ghoſt, ſo, by the operation of the ſame Spirit, the bread and the cup were made his body and blood in a more effectual manner, than as mere repreſentatives [1].

He affirms alſo, that the contents of the Euchariſtic cup, muſt neceſſarily be wine, *mixed with water*; and employs four intire chapters, to prove this mixture to be *of divine inſtitution*; and that it was the univerſal doctrine of the Catholic Church, for above 1500 years, *that our Saviour practiſed, inſtituted and commanded the mixed cup*; *and made water therefore, as well as wine, an eſſential ingredient* [2]. Laſtly, he largely and ſtrongly inſiſts on the duty and neceſſity *of Infant-communion*, or of bringing all infants, even of the tendereſt age, to partake of this ſacrifice: which he enforces by a ſimilar practice both of the *Jews* and Gentiles, and the parity of thoſe arguments, which are alledged for Infant-baptiſm; and, above all, by the conſtant practice of the primitive Church through the three firſt centuries, which he deduces very particularly in ſeveral diſtinct chapters [3]. After the celebration of the Euchariſt, he recommends the revival of the *Agape*, or *Love-feaſt* of the primitive Chriſtians; which was a common entertainment, provided out of the voluntary oblations of the richer communicants, in order to feed the poorer: and was held, he ſays, *for*

[1] P. 285, 296, 297. [2] 315, &c. [3] 367.

above

above three centuries and an half, within the Church; and tho' prohibited afterwards in Churches, continued ſtill to be held in private houſes; as an *uſeful and laudable rite, and not onely of Apoſtolic origin, but of great ſervice to the Chriſtian Church* [1].

To theſe two ſacraments of the Goſpel, the Church of *Rome* has added *five*, but this Proteſtant Catechiſt, *ten*; which he calls *leſſer Sacraments*. Five of them belonging to Baptiſm; *Exorciſm, anointing with oil, the white garment, a taſte of milk and honey, and the unction by holy Chriſm:* the other five are, *the ſign of the Croſs, Impoſition of hands, the Unction of the ſick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony* [2]. The three laſt of theſe are held alſo as ſacraments by the *Romiſh* Church, together with *confirmation* and *penance*, but inſtead of *confirmation*, this writer introduces, *impoſition of hands*, which they call the *outward ſign of it:* and though he does not make a ſacrament of *Penance*, yet he enjoins it, as a neceſſary duty to all Chriſtians; with private confeſſion alſo to a Prieſt, which the *Romaniſts* reckon, as the outward ſign of it [3]. And in truth, all his *leſſer ſacraments*, are nothing elſe but ſo many *Popiſh* ceremonies, now actually practiſed by that Church; which, upon the authority of tradition and the primitive Fathers, he declares to be ſo eſſential, that *it is not in the power of the univerſal Church, to alter or lay*

[1] P. 393. [2] 224. [3] 410, &c.

them

them aſide [1]. And as *to the ſign of the Croſs*, tho' the *Romaniſts* make uſe of it in all their Sacraments, and preſcribe it likewiſe in all the offices of private life, declaring it, as this author alſo does, to have wrought many miracles, yet Popiſh ſuperſtition never reached ſo far, as to advance it to a Sacrament.

As to the other parts of our worſhip due to God, he preſcribes a conſtant attendance on the public and daily ſervice of the Church, *every morning and evening, and on the penitential offices, peculiar to Wedneſdays and Fridays*; which appear, he ſays, *from Tradition, to have been days appointed for divine worſhip by the Apoſtles, as well as Sundays*. And beſides theſe ſtated times, he requires us to attend alſo devoutly, *on the public prayers of the Church at Baptiſm, Confirmation, and Ordination; at Matrimony, the Churching of women, and burial of the dead; at the conſecration of oil, the milk, the honey and the Chriſm; and at all the other benedictions, and Eccleſiaſtical prayers*, which are ſaid over different perſons and things on different occaſions: becauſe all theſe Offices were compoſed *by great ſaints, out of the words of ſcripture, and preſerved by antient tradition, and deſigned to ſanctify all our actions, and uſe of all the creatures.*

As to our private devotions and prayers, beſides the morning and night, he preſcribes a repetition of them, *every third hour of the day*; *at*

[1] P. 195.

nine-

nine in the forenoon, twelve at noon, and three in the afternoon; as being the fixed times of performing them, *during the three firſt centuries:* and he recommends it to thoſe zealous Chriſtians of *heroic piety, who would imitate holy* David, Paul, *and* Silas, to extend their devotion alſo to *the third hour of the night:* according to which diviſion of the day and night into equal ſpaces of three hours each, all the returning times of prayer have acquired the following Latin names in the Romiſh Church; *Prime or Matins, in the morning: Tierce, at nine, or the third hour: Sexte, at noon, or the ſixth hour: None, at three, or the ninth hour: Veſpers, at ſix, in the evening: Compline, at nine at night: Nocturns, at midnight: and Lauds, at three in the morning*, or the *time of Cock-crowing*. To which *Heroic* pitch of devotion, as he calls it, no Chriſtians of theſe later days have had the preſumption to aſpire, or the honor to reach, except ſome Monkiſh orders of the Popiſh Church, or a few wild Enthuſiaſts, or crafty zealots, heroically ambitious of the honor of a Saintſhip. But to give ſome eaſe however under ſo laborious a devotion, to Chriſtians eſpecially engaged in buſineſs, he obſerves, that, if they frequent the public offices of the Church, *their devotions at theſe hours may be very ſhort*; and propoſes to them *the ſign of the Croſs*, made with this form of words, *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt. Amen:* as the ſhorteſt and moſt ſignificant of all prayers: becauſe we confeſs by it, *the myſtery of the*

Trinity; *and, by the motion of our hand, expreſs the figure of the Croſs, or the myſtery of our redemption, with that alſo of the incarnation, on which it depends* [1]. Laſtly, in the act of praying, whether public or private, he directs us, to turn our faces *towards the Eaſt, according to antient tradition*, and adds ſeveral reaſons, which were alledged for it by the Primitive Fathers [2].

He affirms likewiſe, upon the ſame authority, the duty of *praying for the faithful deceaſed:* that *as the Saints in Paradiſe pray for us, ſo we ought to pray for all thoſe, who departed in the faith*, but cannot attain the completion of their happineſs, 'till the final day of judgement. That we ſhould pray even *for the forgiveneſs of their ſins:* for their preſent ſeparate ſtate being the conſequence and puniſhment of Sin, and a ſtate of imperfection, in which the ſoul is capable of improvement, it follows, *that prayers and alms and Euchariſtic ſacrifices offered for them in the Church, may increaſe the bleſſedneſs of their intermediate ſtate, and prevail for the abatement of thoſe rigors, which they might otherwiſe ſuffer in the conflagration of the laſt day* [3].

All theſe ſacramental rites and offices of devotion, which I have hitherto recited, are deduced by him from what he calls, *the common law of the Church*; that is, the practice and cuſtom of primitive Antiquity: but he has col-

[1] P. 175. [2] 176. [3] 164.

lected

lected alſo from its *Statute-law*, or the decrees of Councils, *fix particular Commands of the Church*, as he calls them, which he injoins to all Chriſtians, as of equal obligation.

The firſt command is, *to abſtain from eating blood*. Which he declares to have been obſerved *by the holy Church throughout the world, even to the tenth century*; and that it is laid upon all Chriſtians, *by the law of God, and the tradition and Canons of the primitive Church, to eat of no animal, but what is ſo killed, that the blood of it may be naturally poured out* [1].

The ſecond is, *to offer to God our tithes, firſt fruits, and voluntary oblations*. This he calls *a neceſſary branch of divine worſhip*, and declares, that God had appropriated to himſelf *our tithes*, or the tenth part of our ſubſtance, *from the beginning of the world: and that the oblation of our firſt fruits is commanded alſo by the Holy Ghoſt*, and in all religions, ages, and countries of the world, was ever eſteemed a part of divine worſhip. But beſides *our tithes and firſt fruits*, which are due by the divine law, God expects from us alſo *voluntary oblations*; in the meaſure of which however he leaves us at our liberty; *yet the more we offer, the more acceptably we ſerve him*. Theſe are to be paid to his ſervants and receivers, the Prieſts; tho' not for their own uſe, but to be depoſited in the hands of the Bi-

[1] P. 204.

ſhop,

ſhop, *as a ſtanding treaſury, for the ſupport of the Church, the maintenance of the Clergy, and the relief of the poor, of which the Biſhop is to have the diſpoſal, as being Chriſt's vicar, the prime ſteward of God's revenues, and the chief maſter of his houſhold* [1].

The third is, *to obſerve the Feſtivals of the Church.* Theſe are divided into the greater and leſſer. The greater are, *Eaſter-day, the firſt Sunday after Eaſter, Aſcenſion-day, Whit-ſunday, all the Sundays of the year and Chriſtmas day* [2]. The leſſer are, *all the days between Eaſter and Whitſunday, except Sundays: in which we ſolemnize our Saviour's reſurrection for fifty days ſucceſſively, during which time all faſts are ſuſpended, and we are to pray ſtanding, as on Sundays, in token of joy, and thereby make every one of theſe days equal in a manner to Sundays.* All *Saturdays or Sabbaths likewiſe, except that before Eaſter, are leſſer Feaſts,* having been ſanctified by God from the creation of the world, and in memory of that, continued to be obſerved by the primitive Chriſtians, *as Feſtivals of devotion. Monday alſo and Tueſday after Whitſunday, the Circumciſion, Epiphany, the Purification and Annunciation of the bleſſed Virgin,* and all the other *Saints days,* marked in our preſent Calendars, are in the number of his *leſſer Feſtivals* [3].

The fourth is, *to obſerve the Faſts of the Church:* which are divided alſo into the greater

[1] P. 205. [2] 208. [3] 209.

and leſſer. The greater are *holy Saturday, or the day before Eaſter*; which the Primitive Chriſtians kept with *a vigil and Pernoctation*, in memory of our Lord's reſurrection, which happened early the next morning; about which time they expected alſo his ſecond coming. The next Faſt in ſtrictneſs is *Good Friday*, the preceding day; on which our Lord was crucified. But the primitive Church joined them both together, *as one Faſt of forty hours, and kept it as an Evangelic command.* The other greater Faſts are the *other four preceding days of the ſame week before Eaſter*, as preparatory to the more ſtrict and ſolemn obſervance *of Good Friday and Holy Saturday.* The leſſer Feaſts are, *the Stations, and Lent.* The *Stations* are, *all the Wedneſdays and Fridays of the Year*; being weekly commemorations, *of our Lord's being ſold by Judas on Wedneſday, and crucified on Friday*; and are called *Stations*, in alluſion *to military ſtations and keeping guard.* The uſe of theſe Faſts is, *to puniſh ourſelves for our ſins, by ſuffering hunger and thirſt, depriving ourſelves of our pleaſures, and even of a part of our neceſſary nouriſhment. For by mortifying of the fleſh and weakening the body, we mortify the mind, and diſpoſe it the better for prayer, compunction, and ſerious thoughts* [1].

The fifth is, *to offer and receive the Euchariſt, on every holy day*; at leaſt, *on all the greater Feſtivals:* which relaxation the Church indulged, he ſays, *that ſhe might ſecure a weekly celebration*

[1] P. 210.

of

of it on all Sundays, beſides the Aſcenſion and Chriſtmas-days: which is the leaſt, that is required of all Chriſtians, *both by ſcripture and tradition: and thoſe, who wilfully omit it on the Lord's day, do virtually excommunicate themſelves for a time* [1].

The ſixth command of the Church is, *to pray ſtanding on all Sundays, and on every day, between Eaſter and Whitſunday*, out of reſpect and remembrance of our Lord's reſurrection, which was obſerved by all Churches, from the beginning, on the authority *of Apoſtolic tradition*, and eſpecially enforced, *by the 20th Canon of the firſt great Council of Nice*, A. D. 325. the poſture of kneeling is adapted onely to occaſions of humiliation and penitential devotion, but that of ſtanding, he ſays, *is a beautiful ſymbolic repreſentation of our Lord's reſurrection*; proper to raiſe our thoughts from the earth, and to unite them more cloſely with God, and the things above: and no ceremony of the Church can be more efficacious for the purpoſe of elevating the mind, and inflaming the affections, and ſtirring up the faculties of the ſoul [2].

As to the honors which were paid to *the Martyrs* by the Primitive Churches, he informs us, "that their *reliques or the remains of their* "*bodies* were carefully preſerved and embalmed "and wrapped up in rich cloaths, and the very "drops of their blood gathered up. That, on

[1] P. 217. [2] 219.

" the days of their Martyrdoms, the Chriſtians " uſe to meet together, to celebrate their me- " mories and honor their nativity, as they called " it, or their entrance into eternal life: that " they made theſe days Feſtivals, like Sundays, " and aſſembled at their Tombs, to thank God " for their example, and to excite one another to " imitate it, by reading their acts, and the hiſto- " ry of their ſufferings: and that God worked " miracles at their Tombs, and often at their " Martyrdoms, by which ſeveral perſons preſent " and even their executioners and Judges had " ſometimes been converted [1]."

His account likewiſe of the origin of Monkery, in the primitive ages, is this, " that from the " beginnings of Chriſtianity, there were certain " perſons in the Church, called *Aſcetics*, who, " from a deſire of attaining to a greater per- " fection, than that of common Chriſtians, pro- " feſſed to exerciſe themſelves in great auſteri- " ties, after the example of *John Baptiſt*. Theſe " exerciſes were, to abſtain wholly from fleſh and " wine; to faſt for two or three days ſucceſ- " ſively; to ſpend their time chiefly in devo- " tion; to give up themſelves and their ſub- " ſtance to the ſervice of God and the uſe of the " poor and diſtreſſed, confining themſelves to a " ſingle life, and making themſelves Eunuchs for " the kingdom of Heaven, inuring themſelves " to great hardſhips, watchings, ſleeping on the

[1] P. 146.

"ground, for the promotion of piety and "religion: all which ſeverities were volun- "tary, and exerciſed without any compulſive "rules.

"But about the middle of the third century, "in a time of perſecution, great numbers, to "avoid the fury of it, fled into the deſerts of "*Ægypt*, where they employed themſelves in "acts of piety, and divine contemplations; and "found that ſort of life ſo agreeable, that when "the perſecution ceaſed, they choſe to continue "ſtill in that ſolitary ſtate, whence they came "to be called *Monks*. They lived at firſt in lit- "tle cells or cottages, which they built for them- "ſelves: but towards *the middle of the fourth* "*century they were brought to live in communi-* "*ties, and under rules by St. Pachomius*; who "procured Monaſteries to be built for them "about *Thebais:* and many holy perſons, who "were deſirous to keep up the exact practice of "the Chriſtian religion, which they ſaw declin- "ing, choſe this kind of life. They ſpent their "time in manual labor, and in meditating on "the holy ſcripture; faſted every day 'till to- "wards the evening, and then ſeldom taſted any "thing more, than bread and water: they aſ- "ſembled together to pray at the evening and "in the night; ſlept little, kept a profound "ſilence, practiſed all ſorts of virtues, and lived "in perfect obedience to their ſuperiors, though "there were ſometimes *ſeveral thouſands of*

" *them* under one Governor, for in a ſhort time " they multiplied exceedingly [1].

" From the ſame beginnings and in the ſame " manner, were formed alſo the primitive ſocie- " ties of *religious virgins or nuns*; who practiſed " the ſame auſterities, of *ſilence*, *poverty*, *watch-* " *ings*, *and continual prayer:* and there were ſe- " veral ſaints, who drew up rules for the Mo- " naſtic life of both the ſexes; which ſoon " ſpread through all Chriſtendom; for *St.* " *Martin of Tours* brought it into *France in the* " *fourth century*; and *Pelagius* is ſuppoſed to " have brought it into *England*, *about the begin-* " *ning of the fifth* [2]."

From this ſhort ſketch of the Chriſtian duties, deduced at large by this author, from the united authority of *Scripture and tradition*, the reader will eaſily perceive, what would be the conſequence, of admitting them, as a *rule of faith and practice to Proteſtants.*

For in the firſt place; the neceſſity of a Prieſthood, derived by a lineal deſcent from the Apoſtles, if acknowledged by all Chriſtians, as it is affirmed by this writer, would create incurable diſorders in all Proteſtant communities. According to this principle, if the Prieſthood ſhould once fail, the whole Chriſtian worſhip would be diſſolved at once, without the poſſibility of a renewal, but by a new commiſſion or

[1] P. 147. [2] 149.

revelation

revelation from heaven. Now *this uninterrupted ſucceſſion of Prieſts* is allowed to the Church of *Rome*, but denied by many to the Church of *England*, and not ſo much as pretended to, by any other Church or Sect of Proteſtants: among whom conſequently, neither the Chriſtian Sacraments, nor any part of the paſtoral office can be adminiſtred, without a ſacrilegious profanation, and impious defiance of Chriſt himſelf. How forcibly then would any ſcruples of this kind operate on weak and religious minds, towards driving them into the arms of that Church, in which alone, they could be ſure of receiving the abſolution of their ſin, from the hands of an Apoſtolic Confeſſor.

Secondly, From this plan of primitive Chriſtianity we may obſerve, how tradition, inſtead of ſerving to that uſe, which is more peculiarly aſcribed to it, of adding light and illuſtration to the obſcurer parts of the goſpel, ſerves onely to perplex and obſcure it the more, by multiplying quæſtions, ingrafting new doctrines upon it, clogging it with tireſome ceremonies, and converting it from a rational, to a ritual, ſervice. The article of *the Euchariſt* will confirm this reflection. Our Lord's inſtitution of it, as it is related by all the Evangeliſts, is comprized in a few words, in which he preſcribes *a ſolemn and religious commemoration of his death and ſufferings*, to be perpetually obſerved in his Church: the frequent celebration of

which, by a natural tendency and effect, could not fail to excite, in all his faithful diſciples, a warm affection and zeal for the memory of their Maſter, and confirm their reſolutions of living conformably to his precepts. But tradition is no ſooner called in, to the interpretation of it, than it envelopes it preſently in clouds of myſtic darkneſs; transforms it into *a proper and propitiatory ſacrifice, offered for the dead, as well as the living*; declares the materials of it, the bread and wine, as ſoon as conſecrated by the Prieſt, to be no longer mere repreſentatives, or types of Chriſt's body and blood, but converted, by the operation of the holy Spirit, into the ſame thing with Chriſt himſelf, in power and energy, and to all intents and purpoſes of religion, tho' in myſtery, not in ſubſtance. It mingles the Euchariſt cup alſo, with *wine and water*, tho' by the words of the inſtitution, it appears to have had nothing in it but wine, and affirms *this mixture to be of divine appointment*, tho' there be not the leaſt mention of it in any part of the Goſpel. And, to make this ſacred office ſtill more burthenſome, it injoins to us, as a neceſſary duty, to bring all infants, even of the tendereſt age, to partake of it; a practice, which muſt needs diſturb the ſolemnity of it, and diſſipate the attention, of all who aſſiſt at it. And declares this Sacrament, not onely to be *neceſſary to ſalvation*; but *a means, by which a principle of an happy reſurrection is conveyed into our bodies* [1].

[1] P. 287.

Thus

Thus the *true and full notion*, as he calls it, of *the Euchariſt*, delivered originally by our Lord, within the compaſs of two or three verſes, when dreſſed out in all the trimmings, with which tradition has equipped it, takes up *an hundred and fifty pages, or about eighty intire chapters of this Author's larger Catechiſm.* He apologizes indeed for his prolixity on this article, on the account of its importance, and *the many controverſies, which have ariſen about it in the Chriſtian Church; and becauſe the whole of our religion may fairly be ſummed up in it* [1]: for there is no other article, he ſays, *which requires more pains and ſtudy to be rightly informed in, and that to believe it is indeed a work of labor* [2]. But this very apology for the length of his doctrine, ſeems to be a confutation of the truth of it. For it is certain, that an inſtitution, which cannot be explaned without ſo much learned pains, could never be deſigned for the moſt excellent part of a worſhip, which was calculated for the common ſalvation of all men; or that tradition at leaſt cannot be the proper interpreter of it, which makes it ſo difficult to be underſtood, that it is *a labor to believe it.*

Thirdly, We may obſerve alſo, from this ſame book, what is notorious likewiſe in the Romiſh Church, that tradition, wherever it is admitted into a partnerſhip of authority with the

[1] P. 393. [2] p. 311.

Scriptures,

Scriptures, inſtead of ſerving as its handmaid, as ſome of our Divines affect to call it, has always acted the Miſtreſs, taken the lead, and got the aſcendant ſo far, as to eclipſe the credit of the written word, reduce it as it were to a dead letter, and even baniſh it at laſt from the uſe of the people. Thus in *the primitive Catechiſm* now before us, among all the various rites and doctrines, laid down as eſſential to Chriſtians, for every ſingle one, derived immediately from the Goſpel, we may reckon twenty, I dare ſay, deduced intirely from tradition.

Fourthly, We may now ſee, from a clear deduction of facts and inſtances, as they are ſet forth in this piece, how directly the authority of the primitive Fathers and their traditions tends to lead us into the Church of *Rome:* we ſee it aſcribing a ſupreme and independent power to the Church; aſſerting the Popiſh ſacraments; a propitiatory ſacrifice of Chriſt's body and blood, both for the living and the dead; prayers for the dead, to procure ſome relief and improvement of their intermediate ſtate; Exorciſms, Chriſms, conſecrated oil, ſign of the Croſs, penances, confeſſions to a Prieſt, abſolutions, reliques of Saints; Monks; the preference of ſingle life to the married, as of gold to ſilver; in ſhort, almoſt every thing, now practiſed or profeſſed by the Romaniſts; except *the univerſal ſupremacy* of the Pope, which is diſputed by the Papiſts themſelves; *the divine worſhip of Saints,*

Saints, which they alſo diſavow and endeavour to elude; and abſolute tranſubſtantiation; towards which, however, he has gone as far as he could poſſibly do, while he retains the name of a Proteſtant: but though that character obliged him, to keep as clear of Popery as he was able, yet tradition, we ſee, has carried him to the very confines, and prepared him as it were to ſtep into it, whenever a proper occaſion ſhould invite. For I could never conſider theſe plans of primitive Chriſtianity, when publiſhed by Proteſtants, in any other light than as preliminary articles, offered to the Romiſh Church, as the ground for a treaty of peace and reconciliation, in which the few remaining points of difference might eaſily be accommodated. Which vain project of an union with *Rome*, has ever been the fond wiſh of all thoſe zealots of our Church, who draw their religious principles from the ſource of primitive Antiquity.

I am a perfect ſtranger to the author of this piece, nor have any other knowledge of his character, than what has been ſignified to me by his writings, and the report of common fame. The warm expreſſions of piety and devotion, which run through his whole performance, oblige me to think him an honeſt man; as I take every one to be, who governs himſelf by a virtuous principle, or believes that he does ſo, though he be deceived in the choice, or the application of that principle. Fame alſo has informed

formed me, that he lives up to the character, which his book points out to us: practiſes what he profeſſes; and is an example of that diſcipline which he preſcribes to others: that he is a Proteſtant Prieſt; yet a ſeparatiſt from the communion of our Proteſtant Church; diſaffected to its preſent conſtitution, and conſequently to the preſent government, on which its ſecurity depends, This is the real character which his writings ſuggeſt: this, the natural courſe of his principles, when frankly avowed, and puſhed to their full length. Principles which, among Proteſtants, will ever produce the worſt fruit, when they take root in the beſt minds; will corrupt the pureſt heart; make even the ſincerity of men dangerous to ſociety, and transform a pious, zealous Chriſtian, into an enemy to his country.

Yet theſe are the principles which the *Chapmans*, the *Berrimans*, the *Stebbings*, are ſo zealouſly aſſerting and recommending to this Proteſtant Kingdom. Dr. *Chapman*, as we ſhall ſee in the following Remarks, when driven by unanſwerable teſtimonies, to give up the character of any ancient Father, as favorable to the Popiſh cauſe, takes refuge in *the collective body of them, and the conſentient practice of the primitive Churches*, as the proper *armoury*, or bulwark of Proteſtantiſm: on which ſame foundation, this Catechiſm, which I have been conſidering, is profeſſedly grounded. From this therefore every one

one may now learn, what a ſort of Proteſtantiſm it is, which the authority of thoſe ancients, and the zeal of theſe moderns, would finally impoſe upon us: a Proteſtantiſm compounded of *fanatical Enthuſiaſm*, and *Popiſh Superſtition*; giving itſelf up to an implicit ſubmiſſion to Church authority; baniſhing every thing rational out of its doctrine and diſcipline; placing the principal ſervice of God, in ritual obſervances, and Monkiſh devotions; and obliged to adopt, as *Divine* or *Apoſtolic*, every whim and abſurdity, which, through the credulity, bigotry, policy, or private intereſts of any leading Churchmen, had inſinuated itſelf into the Chriſtian worſhip, within the compaſs of the firſt four hundred years.

REMARKS

REMARKS

ON

OBSERVATIONS, &c.

UPON my firſt and haſty peruſal of theſe *Anonymous Obſervations*, I could not help conſidering them as the work of ſome ſly unbeliever, who, under the maſk of zeal for the honour of the Goſpel, and a pretence of fears and jealouſies, from the freedom of *the Introductory Diſcourſe*, was craftily pointing out every topic and paſſage of it, which, by any art or force, could be ſtrained to the advantage of the Infidel cauſe.

He begins early to drop his ſuſpicions, *that ſomething bad lay at the bottom, which had excited the Author to this undertaking* [1]; and as he advances forward, takes occaſion to declare, *that the Author muſt either renounce his argument or the Goſpel* [2]; *that thoſe, who believe the Fathers of the ſecond and third Centuries to be more credulous than thoſe of the fourth, may fancy the Apoſtles to have been more credulous than them all* [3]. *That if the world was ſo credulous, immediately after the Apoſtles, it will not be eaſy to comprehend, how it ſhould have been much leſs ſo in the Apoſtles times* [4]; *that the Author's charge indeed ſtops*

[1] Obſervat. p. 5. [2] p. 18. [3] p. 18. [4] p. 23.

with

with the Fathers, but that his arguments do not ſtop there [1]; *for if the Fathers can be proved to have been forgers of lies, the conſequences may go a great way* [2].

When I ſaw therefore an unknown writer, entering forwardly into a debate, to which he appeared to be an utter ſtranger; and treating the chief point of it, as a problem, which might poſſibly be true, yet repreſenting it all the while as ruinous to Chriſtianity, what elſe could I ſo naturally think of him, as that he was ſome Infidel in diſguiſe, who was catching all opportunities of prompting the enemies of revelation, to lay hold on every thing, which could furniſh matter of cavil or ridicule to the diſadvantage of the Chriſtian religion: for with whatever view he wrote, it is certain, that the obvious tendency of his performance is, to confirm people in Scepticiſm, and to ſuggeſt arguments for the defence of it.

I have ſince indeed been informed, that he is of a character very different from what I at firſt imagined: celebrated for his *polemic* writings, and eminently diſtinguiſhed by his zeal and orthodox principles: and upon a ſtricter review of his work, I can diſcover many ſtrokes, which ſeem to indicate a genius of that ſort; an eagerneſs to appear the firſt in the diſpute, though he has nothing to offer in it, but the teſtimony of his zeal; the art of playing an hypotheſis againſt fact, and of eluding by a diſtinction,

[1] P. 24. [2] p. 33.

what

what he cannot oppoſe by reaſoning. Yet it puzzles me ſtill, to conſider, how ſuch a veteran in controverſy, and maſter of the *polemic* arts, can be ſo jejune and futile in the matter, and ſo injudicious and inconſiſtent in the management of his argument.

The profeſſed deſign of his *Obſervations*, as it is ſignified in the very Title page, is, *to remove the prejudices of the Author of the Introductory Diſcourſe.* But in a Diſcourſe of that nature, formed in contradiction to opinions univerſally eſtabliſhed, and religiouſly believed, to warn people *againſt the Author's prejudices*, and to attempt ſeriouſly to remove them, is in itſelf abſurd and ridiculous. For in the preſent caſe, on which ſide can the weight of prejudices be ſuppoſed to lie? ſurely, the belief of nations, the teſtimony of ages, and the authority of fifteen Centuries, are the ſtrongeſt prejudices, which can poſſibly be conceived, in favor of any controverted facts; and no contradiction can be offered to them, but under all the diſadvantage and inequality, which any influence of that ſort can create. If our Obſervator therefore had really deſired, to have this quæſtion fairly examined, it ſhould have been his firſt care, to remove theſe capital prejudices out of the way, or, at leaſt, to moderate the force of them, by informing his readers, that if the practice and example of paſt ages, of what duration ſoever, had been thought of weight enough to over-rule all other evidence; no improvement of ſcience, or refor-

mation in religion, nor even Chriſtianity itſelf, could ever have made its way into the world: but inſtead of this, the whole purpoſe of his book is, not to remove, but to ſtrengthen old prejudices, and inculcate new ones in every page, againſt the deſign, the ſubject, and the whole compoſition of *the Introductory Diſcourſe.*

He declares it to be a work, *of no uſe or ſignificancy to us, either as Chriſtians or Proteſtants* [1]; that *it advances nothing towards the general concluſion which it aims at, but leaves the quæſtion juſt as he found it* [2]; that *it quarrels with the whole ſtream of Chriſtian writers, and that a candid man would not have offered ſuch a charge to the public, without producing his evidence at the ſame time* [3]; that *the Fathers are in poſſeſſion, and have a right to keep it, till their title be diſproved* [4]. All which declarations are ſo many contradictions to his pretence of removing prejudices. For it is not poſſible, that *a Diſcourſe of no ſignificancy, advancing nothing, but leaving things juſt as it found them,* ſhould be capable of infuſing any thing prejudicial to any cauſe whatſoever. Yet, what is ſtill more remarkable, he affirms *the twelve laſt pages of it to be nothing elſe, but one thorough impertinency, from the beginning to the end* [5]. This indeed is the true old way of *removing prejudices,* by removing whole treatiſes at once; and ſhews, what our Obſervator would be at; the ſalutary method, now

[1] P. 5, 25. [2] p. 24. [3] p. 6. [4] p. 25. [5] p. 29. See note.

practiſed

practiſed ſo ſucceſsfully abroad, of *an Index expurgatorius*, or what was uſed alſo formerly with equal ſucceſs, at home, an *Imprimatur* by the Chaplains of our Biſhops.

But what is it, after all, which makes thoſe pages ſo completely impertinent and offenſive to him? Why, they contain *an harangue*, he ſays, *on the Scriptures being the rule of faith; and a charge upon the preſent Clergy, of carrying the credit of Eccleſiaſtic Antiquity to an heighth, which tends to throw us again into the hands of the Romiſh Church.* Yet, if ſuch an harangue be true, it can never be impertinent in a Proteſtant country; eſpecially at a time, when Popery is allowed to be gaining ground upon us. And as to *the charge*, as he calls it, upon *the preſent Clergy*, as if it included the whole body of them, it is the exaggeration onely of a polemic writer: for though Dr. *M*——, the Author of that Diſcourſe, charges the Clergy in general, with paying a greater deference to the Authority of the Fathers than is due, and much more than is paid to it by any other Proteſtant Church; yet in the paſſage here referred to, where he is ſpeaking of principles, *now carried to a length which muſt needs alarm all ſerious Proteſtants*, he cannot be underſtood to be charging any other part, or perſons of the Clergy, but thoſe *particular Defenders of the primitive Monks and their miracles*, whoſe names he often mentions, and whoſe principles he particularly expoſes, through that whole Diſcourſe, as dangerous to the Proteſtant

cauſe: which charge he will always be ready to make good, againſt all, who aſſert, and all, who encourage and reward the Aſſertors of ſuch principles.

The argument of the Introductory Diſcourſe is formed upon a ſuppoſition of *the truth of the miracles of Chriſt and the Apoſtles*, as they ſtand recorded in the New Teſtament, and ſets forth the proper diſtinction between them, and the miracles of the ſucceeding ages, in order to ſhew, that whatever be the ſucceſs of that work, the credit of the Goſpel cannot be affected by it. In this our Obſervator perfectly agrees with Dr. *M——n*, and expreſly declares, in different parts of his book, *that, if not ſo much as one true miracle could be found after the days of the Apoſtles, the foundations of Chriſtianity would be equally ſecure* [1]. Yet, notwithſtanding theſe declarations, we find him perpetually inſinuating, that the very attempt to prove, what when actually proved, he affirms, to be of no ſignificancy, is dangerous to the Authority of the Goſpel, and ſufficient to alarm all good Chriſtians with the apprehenſion of its conſequences.

In the ſame manner, all the other Advocates of the primitive miracles, in the midſt of their zeal to aſſert their authority, take care to diſtinguiſh the Apoſtolic miracles, as eſtabliſhed on much clearer evidence and a firmer foundation. Thus Dr. *Berriman*, ſpeaking of a particular miracle of the fifth Century, affirms, *that*

[1] P. 30.

it

it cannot be diſcredited, without rejecting all accounts of miracles, except thoſe of the Scriptures [1]: intimating by that exception, that the Scriptural miracles would ſtand, though all the reſt were overthrown. Yet no ſooner does Dr. *M*—— attempt to overthrow them, than we hear theſe very men crying out with one voice, that *he is overthrowing Chriſtianity itſelf, and whatever his intention may be, that he will carry us of courſe either into Popery or Scepticiſm* [2]. Hence we may obſerve, how eaſily ſpleen and prejudice can over-rule the reaſon and even conviction of theſe writers, and how the zeal, which they ſo warmly expreſs in the preſent caſe, cannot be a zeal for the Goſpel, which they declare to be unconcerned in it, but for ſome particular opinions and ſyſtems, which have been engrafted upon it at different times, for the more commodious ſupport of the intereſts, or eaſe of the leading Churchmen.

Again, it is affirmed *in the Introductory Diſcourſe*, "that the miracles of the fourth Cen-"tury *were univerſally the effects of fraud and im-"poſture*; which yet all the principal Fathers "of that age, partly through weak credulity, "and partly through reaſons of policy, made it "their buſineſs to propagate, in favor of cer-"tain rites and doctrines, which they were de-"ſirous to eſtabliſh: that conſidering the cha-"racters of thoſe Fathers, it was reaſonable to

[1] See Serm. at Lady Moyer's lecture, p. 327. [2] See Def. of Dr. C——n's Charge, p. 46.

" think, that they either forged thoſe miracles
" themſelves, or knew them to be forged by
" others; or, if that ſhould not be granted, it
" was certain at leaſt, that they were ſo far de-
" luded by other people's forgeries, as to take
" them for real miracles: and let the Advo-
" cates of thoſe Fathers chuſe which of theſe al-
" ternatives they pleaſed, it would have the
" ſame force towards evincing Dr. *M*——*'s*
" general concluſion," *That we have no ſufficient ground to believe upon their authority, that any miraculous powers were ſubſiſting in the Church in that age.*

This ſtate of the caſe is clear and conſiſtent. Let us ſee then, how the Obſervator has contrived to perplex it. In the firſt place, he is angry with Dr. *M*——, for charging thoſe miracles to *fraud and impoſture*, when it was *as eaſy to aſcribe them to ſuperſtition and credulity: is every man a knave or cheat*, ſays he, *who believes, that there is virtue in an amulet or charm* [1]? By this eaſy way of putting the quæſtion, one would imagine the diſpute to have turned onely, on the primitive method of *curing the cramp, or the tooth-ach.* But when poſitive teſtimonies have been produced from the moſt venerable of the Fathers, declaring, that *the dead had been raiſed to life, and the blind reſtored to ſight, by touching the reliques* of ſome reputed Saint, or by ſending *their clothes onely to be touched* by them; will *the virtue of an amulet* be ſufficient to account for

[1] Obſervat. p. 13.

the

the reality of ſuch facts, or the belief of that virtue, to juſtify the integrity of ſuch witneſſes? But on this article he aſks, *how Dr. M—— comes to know, that the Fathers did not believe the miracles which they themſelves have recorded* [1]? The anſwer is obvious, that the nature of the things atteſted, and the characters of the perſons atteſting, muſt convince every reaſonable man, that they could not believe them. And here it is curious to obſerve, how the ſtate of the controverſy is of a ſudden reverſed: for the Obſervator, whoſe chief quarrel with Dr. *M*—— is, for his injurious opinion and treatment of the ancient Fathers, now takes the oppoſite ſide, and quarrels with him, for thinking more highly of them than he himſelf does. Dr. *M*—— conceives ſo good an opinion of their underſtanding, as to think it impoſſible, that they ſhould not diſcover the palpable forgery of the abſurd ſtories which they relate; whereas the Obſervator takes them to have been ſo groſly ignorant and credulous, that they might probably believe them.

Since he is ſo fond then of this hypotheſis of their *credulity*, and thinks it, the onely way of ſaving the more valuable character of their integrity, it will be proper to conſider the nature and extent of it a little more preciſely, by applying it to a particular fact or two, on which it is ſuppoſed to have been exerciſed: which I ſhall extract again from St. *Jerom*, as being of all the Ancients, the moſt generally eſteemed for

[1] P. 14.

his learning and judgement, by the Divines of theſe days.

This Father, in his life of St. *Hilarion the Monk*, among many other monſtrous ſtories, relates, "how that holy man happening to travel in *Dalmatia*, was there preſently informed, "that a terrible Dragon was laying waſte the "whole province, of ſo enormous a ſize and "ſtrength, that he could ſuck up into his "mouth, by the force of his breath, whole oxen and ſheep, together with the herdſmen and "ſhepherds, and ſwallow them down at once. "*Hilarion* therefore, being implored by the inhabitants of the country, to deliver them "from this monſter, ordered a pile of wood to "be prepared, and having put up his prayers to "Chriſt, called out the Dragon and commanded it to aſcend the pile, which being done accordingly, he ſet fire to the wood, and ſo the "beaſt was burnt alive, in the ſight of all the "people [1]."

The ſame Father, in his Life alſo of an Hermit, named *Paul*, tells this ſtory, "that when "St. *Anthony*, another Hermit, was travelling "through the deſerts of *Egypt*, to ſeek out *Paul*, "whom he was ordered to viſit by a divine revelation, he met with a *Centaur* upon the "road, and being amazed at the figure of ſo "ſtrange a creature, and having armed himſelf "with the ſign of the Croſs, he demanded of "the beaſt, in what part of the deſert the Ser-

[1] Hieron. Op. Tom. IV. par. ii. p. 87.

"vant of God reſided: to which the *Centaur* "made ſome anſwer in a ſtrange and horrible "tone of voice, and with geſtures of great civi- "lity, pointed out the way to him at the ſame "time, by ſtretching out his right hand, and "then ran ſwiftly away." Upon which, *Jerom* leaves it as a problem, to the conſideration of the reader, *whether the Devil aſſumed that ſhape, to affright the holy man, or the Deſerts, fruitful of monſters, produced that ſpecies alſo of animals.* But be that as it will, "*Anthony* had not gone "many ſteps farther, wondering within himſelf "at what he had juſt ſeen, before he eſpied a "*Satyr* approaching towards him, or a little "man, with Goat's feet, a crooked noſe, and a "forehead armed with horns, who, in token "of peace, offered him the fruit of the palm "tree, and being aſked preſently by *Anthony*, "what he was, gave this anſwer; I am a mor- "tal, and one of thoſe inhabitants of the De- "ſert, whom the deluded Gentiles worſhip, "under the names of *Fauns*, *Satyrs*, and *In-* "*cubi*, and am now deputed, as an Embaſſa- "dor from our whole tribe, to beg your prayers "and interceſſion for us, to our common "Lord and maſter, whom we know to have "been ſent for the ſalvation of the whole "world:"—To which ſtory *Jerom* adds this remark; "that no man need to be ſcrupulous "about the truth of it, becauſe it was confirmed "to the whole world, in the time of *Conſtantin*, "when a little man, of the ſame ſpecies, was "brought

" brought alive to *Alexandria*, and afforded a " remarkable ſpectacle to the whole people [1]."

Now it is allowed by all, that St. *Jerom* was a man of great parts and knowledge: Dr. *Chapman* declares, *that he underſtood the nature of piety and ſuperſtition, as well as any man living: and were he now alive, would ſoon do juſtice to himſelf and his brethren by his pen, and laſh his revilers into a little more gravity and civility* [2]. If then, notwithſtanding the authority of ſo great a man, Dr. *M*—— finds himſelf convinced from the very nature of theſe ſtories, that they are all utterly fabulous, he muſt be thought to judge reaſonably, in believing, that St. *Jerom*, (the ſuperiority of whoſe judgement and learning he freely acknowledges) could not fail of being convinced of it too. But if our Obſervator has any ſcruples ſtill on this head, and will inſiſt, that *Jerom* might actually believe them, I am content to debate the matter with him on his own terms, and refer the whole quæſtion to this ſingle iſſue; *whether men ſo groſsly credulous and ſuperſtitious can be authentic witneſſes of miracles, which tend to confirm their particular intereſts, or prejudices, or favorite opinions?*

In the mean while, I find it neceſſary to take notice of a diſtinction or two, of which he makes great uſe, and in which his chief ſtrength lies; for unleſs we can clear ourſelves of theſe, we may ſpare the pains of diſputing with him,

[1] Ibid. p. 70, 71. [2] See Miſcell. Tracts, p. 182. and Def. of his Charge, p. 38.

ſince

ſince by their help, he can evade the concluſion, though he allows all the premiſes. For example, it is affirmed in *the Introductory Diſcourſe, that the Fathers themſelves, when they are diſpoſed to ſpeak truth, have not ſcrupled to confeſs, that miracles were actually ceaſed in the fourth Century, becauſe the Church ſtood no longer in need of them* [1]. The Obſervator himſelf allows, *that there are many ſuch paſſages in thoſe Fathers* [2]. Yet the ſame Fathers, on other occaſions, confidently affirm, and ſometimes from their own knowledge, that perpetual miracles were ſtill wrought in the ſame age, by *reliques, ſacred oil, holy water, the ſign of the Croſs, and the ſacramental bread.* Now from paſſages, ſo ſeemingly oppoſite and contradictory, a plain man would naturally conclude, that thoſe Fathers were inconſiſtent with themſelves, and telling us conſequently what was falſe, either on the one ſide or the other. But ſuch an imagination muſt not be entertained, it ſeems, of perſons ſo holy and venerable; who were *too good*, as Dr. *Chapman* declares, *to offer at any quirks or illuſions* [3]: of which this Obſervator will preſently convince us, and ſolve the difficulty. For having diſcovered, that the miracles, which are recorded by St. *Auſtin*, are all ſaid to have been wrought, not *by the miniſtry of living men, extraordinarily appointed, as in the Apoſtles days, but either by the Sacraments, or by prayer, or the memories of the*

[1] See Diſc. p. 36. [2] Obſerv. p. 9. See note.
[3] Miſcell. Tracts, p. 26.

Martyrs,

Martyrs, he makes this reflection upon it, that "if the Author of the *Introductory Diſcourſe* "would have underſtood thoſe paſſages of the "Fathers, as they ought to be underſtood, with "this diſtinction, he would have ſpared his un-"mannerly reflection. Becauſe it might be "true, *that miracles were then wrought by the Sa-"craments, though it was not true, that any were "then wrought by the miniſtry of living men, as in "the days of the Apoſtles* [1]."

Theſe polemic writers, if they can ſerve a preſent turn, and get rid of ſome incidental difficulty in a debate, by any quibble of this ſort, ſeldom look forward, or conſider, what effect it may have on the main quæſtion, or on Chriſtianity itſelf. The preſent diſtinction ſerves to clear the Fathers from the charge of inconſiſtency; and ſo far it will be applauded by all the admirers of primitive antiquity; but it has not yet done half its work; for unleſs the reaſon, aſſigned by thoſe Fathers, for *the ceſſation of miracles*, can be diſtinguiſhed alſo away, they muſt be underſtood to be ſpeaking of an *univerſal ceſſation*, becauſe, *the Church*, as they tell us, *ſtood no longer in need of them*. But here indeed, our Obſervator's diſtinction will do moſt notable ſervice: for though the religion of the Goſpel, after it had gained an eſtabliſhment in the world, ſtood no longer in need of miracles, wrought *by the miniſtry of living men*, as in the days of the Apoſtles, which were neceſſary onely to the firſt

[1] Obſerv. p. 9. note.

plantation

plantation of it, yet the new rites and doctrines engrafted upon that *Goſpel-religion*, with regard to *the Sacraments*, *the reliques* of Saints, and *Monks*, &c. required new miracles of a different kind, to facilitate the eſtabliſhment alſo of theſe; and ſince living men were no longer indued with thoſe extraordinary gifts, the inanimate part of the creation was now called up in judgement againſt the contemners of theſe rites; and the *rotten bones and duſt of the Martyrs*; or *a rag of their old cloaths*; *a drop of water, or oil*; *a bit of bread*; *the chip of an old Croſs, or the figure of a new one*; in ſhort, every thing which had been touched by a Saint, or conſecrated by a Prieſt, began to work miracles, and continues to do ſo, in the ſame manner, from that time to this, through four parts in five of the whole Chriſtian world.

Thus we ſee, what clear work our Obſervator's diſtinction would make in the preſent quæſtion. But there is one unhappy circumſtance belonging to it, which he is not perhaps aware of, or willing at leaſt to conceal, that it is contrary to fact, and the teſtimony of thoſe very Fathers, in whoſe defence he now urges it. For though they ſpeak much more frequently of miracles wrought by *reliques, and the Sacraments*, &c. than of any other kind, yet they ſpeak likewiſe of ſeveral, which they atteſt to be wrought by *holy Monks, then living*; by the credit of which, they chiefly eſtabliſhed the Monkiſh order, though vile and contemptible in the judgement

judgement of the wiſer and better ſort of the Chriſtian laity in thoſe very days.

Again, Dr. *M*—— lays it down for a maxim, in *the Introductory Diſcourſe*, that *whenever any ſacred rite becomes the inſtrument of real miracles, we ought to conſider that rite, as confirmed by divine approbation:* whence he infers, *that if we admit the miracles of the fourth Century, we muſt admit the rites which thoſe miracles confirmed, and thoſe Fathers practiſed.* But here again, the Obſervator ſtops us ſhort with a diſtinction, without which, he ſays, *that reaſoning cannot be true* [1]. The diſtinction is this; "that mira-
"cles wrought by *the reliques* of the Martyrs, or
"by the *Sacraments*, or by *holy Monks*, cannot
"reaſonably be interpreted to authoriſe any ſu-
"perſtitious practice or doctrine, which pre-
"vailed in thoſe times with regard to *reliques*,
"or *the Sacrament*, or *Monkery*, unleſs there be
"ſome circumſtance in them, which ſpecifies
"ſuch an interpretation; for otherwiſe they
"muſt be underſtood onely, to confirm that re-
"ligion of the Goſpel, for which thoſe Martyrs
"died, and which thoſe Monks profeſſed." In the ſupport of which diſtinction, he ſpends two or three pages, with ſome little ſubtilty and refinement, but not a grain of ſenſe in them; and ſerving onely to illuſtrate his own ignorance of the times, and the ſubject too, of which he is talking.

[1] Obſerv. p. 8, 10.

For

For inſtance; it was the principal devotion of the fourth Century, in all caſes of ſickneſs or diſtreſs, *to fly to the tombs of the Martyrs*; grounded on a general perſuaſion, that by proſtrating themſelves *before their reliques, and eſpecially by touching them*, they ſhould find preſent cure and relief: and great numbers are affirmed by the Fathers, to have been cured in this manner of all ſorts of diſeaſes, and ſeveral, *to have been raiſed even from the dead.* Now let him diſtinguiſh here, as much as he pleaſes, it is certain from the experience of all ages, that the atteſtation and belief of ſuch miraculous cures never had any other effect, or were underſtood to have any other meaning, than to imprint an opinion of *a divine virtue in the reliques*, and conſequently, to authoriſe *the worſhip* which was paid to them: which began to be paid, from the very moment in which they firſt began to work miracles, and was ſoon carried to that extravagance, with which we ſee it practiſed at this day, in the Church of *Rome.*

The Obſervator however inſiſts, *that if God thinks fit, to work a cure by dead men's bones, it will not follow, that dead men or their bones ought to be worſhiped* [1]. But the fact is, that the worſhip of them did immediately follow, and has ever ſince followed, and muſt for ever follow, the belief of ſuch cures, to the utter confutation of his ſilly hypotheſis. For in order to defend the authority of the Fathers, he firſt ſuppoſes it true,

[1] Obſerv. p. 10.

that miracles were really wrought by *dead men's bones*; and then, in contradiction to their authority, is forced to deny the uſe and end for which the ſame Fathers declare them to have been wrought, and which, by the credit of thoſe pretended miracles, gained an eſtabliſhment through the whole Chriſtian world: whereas the end for which they were wrought, and the effect which they have conſtantly produced, ought to have convinced him, and every other Proteſtant, that they were all mere fictions.

For it is certain, though he does not ſeem to know it, that all the miracles of this kind were ſuſpected and contemned, from the very beginning, by the more diſcreet and honeſt part of the Clergy, who argued, "that ſigns and wonders "were proper indeed, for the converſion of Hea-"thens and unbelievers, whoſe prejudices were "too ſtrong to be over-ruled by the cool argu-"ments of reaſon; but that miracles wrought "by *reliques*, within the Church and among the "faithful, were of no uſe to the advancement of "the Goſpel, but tended to corrupt and debaſe "it, by the introduction of paganiſh ſuperſti-"tions into the Chriſtian worſhip [1]." Which controverſy began with the firſt relique-worſhip of thoſe primitive ages, in the ſame manner as it is carried on at this day, between the Proteſtants and Papiſts, yet the Obſervator ſuppoſes, that God might be working miracles all the while, by *dead men's bones*, without intending

[1] Vid. Hieron. Op. Tom. IV. par. ii. p. 285.

that

that they ſhould give any ſanction to a ſuperſtitious worſhip, intirely grounded upon the belief, that his approbation was ſignified by thoſe very miracles.

But he obſerves, "that the Author of *the Introductory Diſcourſe*, would have had a better "pretence for aſſerting, that we muſt either ac-"cept the doctrines, or reject the miracles of "thoſe ages, if he could produce any Monk or "other perſon, who appealed expreſsly to mi-"racles, in confirmation of an uſage, not war-"ranted by Scripture, and to be received as of "divine appointment [1]." If he had been acquainted with Eccleſiaſtic Antiquity, he could not be at a loſs for examples of that ſort; the very *Diſcourſe*, which he pretends to confute, affords a remarkable one, in the controverſy between *Vigilantius*, who proteſted againſt *the religious honors paid to the bones and duſt of the Martyrs*, and *St. Jerom*, who defended them: *Anſwer me*, ſays *Jerom*, *how it comes to paſs, that in this vile duſt and aſhes, there is ſo great a manifeſtation of ſigns and wonders* [2]. For what is this, but a direct appeal to a divine interpoſition, in favor of *that relique-worſhip*, which the *primitive Proteſtant* was condemning, and the *primitive Father* defending?

Having now entertained us with all the little cavils, which occurred to him on this article, he proceeds to confirm them, by the authority of *Dr. Hoget*, whoſe *determination*, as he calls it, *on*

[1] Obſ. p. 9. [2] Hieron. ibid.

this very argument, he has tranſcribed at length in two paragraphs. And leſt we ſhould wonder, why the opinion of that ingenious writer ſhould be introduced under the pompous title, *of a determination*, he refers us, for the reaſon of it, to the bottom of the page [1]; where we are told, *that he was once the Preacher of Gray's Inn*, as if nothing but what is deciſive could be delivered from that pulpit.

Let us ſee then, what it is, that *Dr. Claget has determined* on this quæſtion. He declares in the firſt place, *that the miracles of the fourth century are urged by the Romaniſts, as an invincible argument, of God's approving the honor given to the Saints and reliques of that age.* But when he attempts to confute that invincible argument, upon the common hypotheſis, of the truth of thoſe miracles, he does nothing more, than what our Obſervator has been doing, and all others muſt do in the ſame caſe, trifle, and ſhuffle, and labor for pitiful diſtinctions, which betray a conſciouſneſs of acting againſt his judgement, and oblige him, after all, to ſignify, that he did not believe thoſe miracles to be true. But what is more remarkable; in the ſingle paſſage of the two paragraphs, here tranſcribed, in which *Dr. Claget* can be ſaid *to determine* any thing at all, he *determines* in favor of *Dr. M—n's* argument, and declares the ſame opinion, with reſpect to the primitive miracles, which is declared in *the Introductory Diſcourſe*, as it is expreſſed by him in

[1] Obſerv. p. 11.

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the following words; *And if I ſhould ſay, that they, who can be content with the old religion [of the ſcriptures] may and ought to be content with the old miracles [of the ſcriptures] I ſhould ſay no other thing, but what I could juſtify* [1].

But *Dr. Claget*, as the Obſervator tells us, *imputes the falſe miracles of the fourth century to credulity* [2]; whereas Dr. *M—n* charges them *to fraud and impoſture, yet ſometimes, when he is in better mood, aſcribes them alſo himſelf to credulity.* Whence he takes occaſion to cenſure him, *for talking inconſiſtently, and at random, and varying his charge, as his humour varies* [3]. Which ſilly blunder runs through his whole performance, and ſhews how little he has thought upon his ſubject, ſince this obvious reflection has never once occurred to him, "that where-ever falſe "miracles have obtained a general credit, there "*fraud and credulity* muſt both have been jointly "employed in producing that effect; *fraud* in "the contrivance, and *credulity* in the reception "of them; and if either of theſe can be juſtly "charged upon the Fathers, that it will have the "ſame force, with reſpect to the argument of "the *Introductory Diſcourſe.*"

There is one method of reaſoning, peculiar to this Obſervator, and which I have rarely met with any where elſe; that in the want of arguments, he can form them at pleaſure, even from his own ignorance; the inſtances of which, he frequently urges, as ſo many objections to the

[1] P. 12. [2] 13. [3] 15, 33.

Introductory Diſcourſe. I cannot ſee this; *do not underſtand that*; *am not ſatisfied that his account is fair*; *know no ſuch thing*; *think the Gentleman miſtaken*; are common objections with him [1]. And though in other writers, a confeſſion of ignorance generally carries ſome appearance of modeſty, yet in this, it ſeems to flow from that ſort of pride, which cannot allow any man, to know more of any ſubject than himſelf, or any thing to be true, of which he can be ignorant.

He ſays, "that he knows no book, not Canonical, which paſſed upon all the Fathers, as genuin and divine, through ſeveral ſucceſſive ages: nor does it follow, that becauſe ſome Fathers cited ſpurious pieces, therefore they were held in the ſame rank with the Scriptures [2]." To which it will be a ſufficient anſwer for the preſent, that, in the age immediately ſucceding to that of the Apoſtles, certain writings were forged by ſome of *the ableſt and moſt learned of the Chriſtians*, under the title of *Sibylline books or oracles*, which were falſely aſcribed to the antient *Sibyl*, and pretended to foretell and deſcribe prophetically, all the principal acts and circumſtances of our Saviour's life. Which books were cited by all the Fathers, and in all ages, from *Juſtin Martyr's* time down to the Reformation, as genuin, and inſpired by God, in the ſame manner, as *the prophetic books of the Old Teſtament*; and particularly, in the ſecond century, that *Clemens of Alexandria*, one

[1] P. 5, 7, 18, 20, 26. [2] 21.

of the moſt learned and critical of all the Fathers, appeals to their authority as divine, and confirms it by the expreſs teſtimonies of St. *Peter* and St. *Paul*, which he draws likewiſe, from certain ſpurious books, which were current in that age, and believed to be the genuin writings of thoſe Apoſtles.

But here again, he throws in one of his puzzling quæſtions, and aſks; "what does the au-"thor *of the Diſcourſe* know of the abilities, "learning, or religion of thoſe primitive forgers "of books, whom he calls the ableſt and moſt "learned of the Chriſtians [1]?" To which I may readily anſwer, that he knows nothing more, than what every man of ſenſe may know, as well as he, from the very nature of the thing; that books, written upon the plan, and for the defence of the Goſpel, full of piety and Chriſtian principles, at a time, when that religion was perſecuted by all the powers on earth, muſt needs have been written by Chriſtians; and being ſo artfully written, and ſo highly eſteemed, as to paſs upon the moſt judicious, for divine or apoſtolic compoſitions, they muſt have been written alſo, by the *ableſt and moſt learned* of the Chriſtians, at a time, when the whole body of them was generally reproached for their ruſticity and want of learning.

He condeſcends, indeed, to grant, though with ſome caution, and for *argument's ſake*, as he ſays, *that the Fathers made uſe, both of ſpurious books,*

[1] P. 22.

and forged miracles: from which he draws this inference; "that as together with thoſe ſpurious books, they uſed ſome, which were genuin, "ſo it is natural to ſuppoſe, that among their "falſe miracles there might be ſome alſo, "which were real: and then aſks, how this can "help to ſupport the general concluſion, that "*no miracles were wrought in thoſe ages* [1]." But from a joint uſe of *ſpurious and genuin books*, to infer a joint uſe alſo of *ſpurious and genuin miracles*, is weak and fallacious; becauſe there is no analogy between the two caſes: for the uſe of books, whether ſpurious or genuin, depends intirely on man; whereas in the uſe of miracles, as far as any of them are true, God himſelf muſt alſo be concerned. When the leaders therefore of a Church, either through craft or credulity, are impoſing falſe miracles upon the people; to ſuppoſe, that God would become a party, and throw in a true miracle now and then, to give them credit, is not onely an abſurd, but impious ſuppoſition. But ſhould I allow, that the detection of ſpurious books and falſe miracles, does not neceſſarily prove, that there were no true miracles in the ſame age, and will not conſequently ſupport Dr. *M—'s* general concluſion; yet the Obſervator's quæſtion is certainly impertinent, becauſe he might have ſeen, from the *Introductory Diſcourſe*, that the proof of thoſe forgeries was not intended, *to ſupport that concluſion*, but onely to ſtrengthen the

[1] P. 22.

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probability of it, in concert with twenty others, which more directly confirm it. The whole purpoſe, for which it is urged, is granted by himſelf, and muſt be allowed by every body elſe, that thoſe, who *forged books*, would, for the ſame cauſe, *forge miracles* too, if there was an occaſion for them; and that the frequent uſe of ſuch forgeries, which is allowed to have been made by the principal Fathers, muſt increaſe the ſuſpicion, that all the miracles, which they atteſt, were of the ſame kind.

Among many other cenſures upon the Author of *the Introductory Diſcourſe*, he charges him, "with acting diſingenuouſly, in publiſhing it, "without ſending his larger work abroad at the "ſame time, and ſcattering his ſurmiſes, before "the evidence is heard. Which has the ap-"pearance, he ſays, of an experiment rather, to "try the ſenſe of the public, than of confidence "in the juſtice of his cauſe [1]." And here, indeed, I readily agree with him, that, by the ſeparate publication of *that Diſcourſe*, the Author of it ſeems to intimate ſome diſtruſt of himſelf, and a temper totally different from that confidence, with which the Obſervator ruſhes into a controverſy, without any previous acquaintance with it: who yet in this very cauſe, and before the evidence, as he complains, is heard, makes no ſcruple to pronounce ſentence, and like a worthy Eccleſiaſtic Judge, to diſmiſs it at once, as frivolous and vexatious.

[1] Obſervat. p. 24.

. But whatever judgement he may think fit to declare on the ſubject of the *Introductory Diſcourſe*; Dr. *M——n* knows it to be important, and treats it as ſuch; yet is ſenſible, that he ſtands ſingle in the defence of it, and aware of the cenſures, which it may draw upon him from the bigotted, the intereſted, and the ambitious part of the Clergy; from ſome, who poſſeſs the chief preferments of the Church, and from all the numerous tribe, who court them. He remembers, what clamors and injurious ſuſpicions, the freedom of his writings has formerly drawn upon him from that ſame ſort of men; who treat him as an enemy, not onely to the preſent eſtabliſhment of our Church, but to religion itſelf: yet, conſcious of his integrity, and that his principles tend to fix them both on a more ſecure foundation, he writes with no other view, than to unite all reaſonable Proteſtants the more firmly in their defence; and to guard our people, as well from *Popiſh ſuperſtition*, as *fanatical enthuſiaſm*; both of them equally dangerous to the peace of theſe Kingdoms, and both making advances upon us at this very time, from different quarters indeed, and parties of men, but from the ſame ſource and pattern of primitive antiquity.

In theſe circumſtances, perſuaded that he was doing ſervice, yet decried, as if he were doing miſchief to Chriſtianity, how could he act with more candor or deference to the public authority, than by ſending his ſcheme abroad in this

plain

plain and naked form; that if any one of ſuperior judgement and knowledge of Antiquity, ſhould happen to convince him, either of the falſehood or iniquity of it, he might withdraw it in time, before he had engaged himſelf too forwardly in it, or warmed himſelf and his readers too much, to judge impartially of the particular proofs, which may be alledged in confirmation of it. But if it be found, after all, to contain nothing either falſe or iniquitous, nor to threaten any hurt to any thing, but to groundleſs ſyſtems, and ſuperſtitious opinions, which have no other claim to be retained, but that they have long been eſtabliſhed, and are of no other uſe, but to lull us on in a ſlothful ignorance and implicit credulity, or to gratify the indolence of ſome leading Churchmen, who think, that nothing can want a change which contributes to their repoſe. If this, I ſay, ſhould be the caſe, and no material objection be offered, but that perpetual obſtacle of all reformation, *an affected dread of improbable conſequences, and the danger of diſturbing ſettlements*, he will not be driven by any diſcouragement, which he may meet with, from purſuing his deſtined taſk of publiſhing his free thoughts on all quæſtions, and eſpecially on thoſe which relate to religion, as far as he believes them to be true, and of benefit alſo to the public.

But to return to our Obſervator, who begs our patience for one word more, concerning the connection between the argument of *the Introductory*

ductory Diſcourſe, and our controverſy with the *Church of Rome*: with reſpect to which, it is affirmed in that Diſcourſe, *that by admitting the miracles of the primitive ages, we ſhall be entangled in a ſeries of difficulties, whence we can never fairly extricate ourſelves, without allowing the ſame miraculous powers even to the preſent age.* Here again he aſks, *what are theſe difficulties which the Gentleman is ſo afraid of?* declares, that *he ſees none; and that we may ſurely be juſtified in admitting the miracles of the ſecond and third centuries, without being obliged to receive the Popiſh legends* [1]. But by what principle or diſtinction may we be ſo ſure of it? For even his *polemic genius* has not been able to ſuggeſt any: and it is certain, that every other Proteſtant, who has taken the moſt pains, towards ſearching this matter to the bottom, has found thoſe pains perpetually fruſtrated by inſuperable difficulties. In condeſcenſion, therefore, to his confeſſed ignorance, I ſhall endeavour to lay the quæſtion before him in ſuch a light, as may inable him to ſee ſome of its difficulties, if his blindneſs be not incurable.

It is allowed by all Chriſtians, that the miraculous gifts, which are mentioned in the Goſpel, continued in the Church, through the Apoſtolic age: and it is affirmed by the Fathers and Church Hiſtorians, that they ſubſiſted ſtill in the ſame manner, after the days of the Apoſtles, and were openly exerted in every ſucceeding

[1] Obſ. p. 26.

age,

age, down even to the preſent: which is now the prevailing opinion, in much the greateſt part of the Chriſtian world; and the chief argument, by which *the ſuperſtitious rites and doctrines of the Romiſh Church* are at this day ſupported.

The Proteſtants, on the other hand, in contradiction to the Romaniſts, univerſally affirm, that *the miraculous gifts of the Apoſtolic days have long ſince utterly ceaſed* in the Chriſtian Church, but cannot agree among themſelves about the time, when the ceſſation of them commenced; nor have been able to aſſign any probable criterion, by which we may declare them, to have proceeded thus far and no farther: yet the Obſervator ſees no difficulty in the caſe, and cannot conceive wherein it lies.

Many of the Proteſtants, indeed, as it is ſaid in *the Introductory Diſcourſe*, take the converſion of the Roman Empire to have been the æra, in which true miracles ceaſed. But this is a mere arbitrary hypotheſis, grounded neither on Hiſtory, nor any ſolid reaſon; becauſe miracles are ſaid to have been wrought ſtill, after that period, as freely as before it, and in ſome caſes atteſted by the ſame witneſſes; who, by this hypotheſis, muſt be held worthy of all credit before that revolution, yet unworthy of any, immediately after it. But what is ſtill of more difficult digeſtion, this ſame hypotheſis, if admitted to be true, gives the lie at once to all the illuſtrious Fathers of the fourth Century, *St. Epiphanius, St. Baſil, St. Athanaſius, St. Jerom, St.*

St. Ambroſe, St. Chryſoſtom, St. Auſtin, &c. perſons the moſt highly reverenced and Sainted by the Catholic Church, for their piety, probity, zeal, and ſervices to the Chriſtian religion: who have all ſeverally recorded and affirmed great numbers of miracles, to have been wrought in their times, many years after the converſion of the Roman Empire.

If we trace the ſucceſſion of miracles ſtill lower, we ſhall find Dr. *Chapman* defending ſome even of the fifth century; the moſt extravagant perhaps that any hiſtory has recorded; yet declaring, *that we cannot reject them, without ſhaking the credit of all human teſtimony, and believing nothing but what we ſee and feel and know ourſelves* [1]. And his fellow-laborer, Dr. *Berriman*, makes the ſame declaration, in favor of another miracle, in the end of the ſame century, *which cannot be diſcredited*, he ſays, *without ſhaking the faith of hiſtory*, and *rejecting all accounts of miracles, beſides thoſe of the Scriptures* [2].

Thus according to the judgement of theſe two Proteſtant Divines, diſtinguiſhed by their eminent zeal for primitive antiquity, miracles were ſtill ſubſiſting in the Church, even after it was plunged into the depths of Popery; yet our Obſervator ſees no difficulty. He will ſay, perhaps, that wherever we find any ſuperſtitious rites eſtabliſhed, or incredible facts affirmed, by a pretence of miracles, there we ought to diſtin-

[1] Miſcell. Tracts, p. 167. [2] Serm. at Lady Moyer's Lect. p. 327.

guiſh

guiſh and reject ſuch miracles. But this is to beg the quæſtion, not to prove it; and is too precarious a way of reaſoning to give any ſatisfaction; becauſe what ſeems incredible to one, may ſeem credible to another: and Dr. *Berriman*, ſpeaking of *the miracles of the ſixth century*, has over-ruled every plea of that kind, by declaring, *that we have no reaſon to diſpute the truth of the facts, on account of the miraculouſneſs, or natural incredibility of them, unleſs it can be proved, as it certainly cannot be, that miracles were ceaſed in that age* [1].

Thus which way ſoever we turn ourſelves, we ſhall be entangled onely the more, by our ſtruggling. If we urge the incredibility of the facts related in theſe later ages, theſe Advocates tell us preſently, that the ſame objection bears as ſtrongly againſt the earlier ages, but that the authority of the witneſſes will over-rule it in both; if we diſpute the veracity of the later witneſſes, they affirm them to be full as credible, as the more ancient, and their evidence as convincing as human teſtimony can poſſibly be. So that no other part is left, but either, to reject all miracles, except thoſe of the Scriptures, agreeably to the genuin intereſts and principles of Proteſtants; or elſe, to admit them all, agreeably to the practice and policy of the Romaniſts. For what Dr. *Berriman* has declared, concerning *the miracles of the ſixth century*, may as juſtly be applied to the *miracles of the ſixteenth*,

[1] Ibid. 356.

that

"doctrines [1]." And in another place he adds theſe words; "Say the worſt you can ſay, "(and more, I am perſuaded, than will ever be "proved to be true) that there is not ſo much "as one miracle upon record, ſince the days of "the Apoſtles, that is ſufficiently atteſted: what "has Chriſtianity to do with this? Nothing. "For Chriſtianity ſtands not upon the new mi-"racles, but upon the old [2]." But though this be true; I muſt put him however in mind of what he ought to have intimated at the ſame time, that it is true onely, with regard to that Chriſtianity which is profeſſed by Proteſtants; whereas *Popiſh Chriſtianity*, which poſſeſſes much the largeſt ſhare of the Chriſtian world, would be undone at once, if the authority of the primitive Fathers and primitive miracles ſhould be rejected in common by all Chriſtians.

The ſumm then of all, which our Obſervator has affirmed on this quæſtion, with any ſenſe or truth, as well as of Dr. *Clagat's determination*, on which he lays no ſmall ſtreſs, amounts to no more than this, *that the Proteſtant religion ſtands firm upon the foundation of the old miracles of the Goſpel; and that Proteſtants, conſequently, if they are conſiſtent with themſelves, ought to be content with thoſe old miracles, and neglect all the reſt.* And this, I ſay, is as much as Dr. *M*—— can expect from the generality of thoſe, who may happen to read his *Introductory Diſcourſe*. For he is not ſo weak as to imagine, that an argu-

[1] Obſ. p. 30. [2] P. 32.

ment

ment ſo new, and ſo little underſtood, and urged in contradiction to the moſt inveterate prejudices, can carry conviction with it every where, to the length of his own perſuaſion; or prevail at once over the teſtimony of ſixteen centuries. Yet he may flatter himſelf without vanity, that whether the primitive miracles be thought true or falſe, he ſhall convince the cool and conſiderate part of his readers, that the Proteſtant cauſe has no concern at all with them, and will find its beſt defence and ſecurity, both againſt the Papiſts and the Freethinkers, in a total neglect and rejection of them.

This is what the Obſervator himſelf has granted in effect; and what many more, I dare ſay, will grant with him, upon the peruſal of *the Introductory Diſcourſe*. The onely difference is, that every liberal inquirer, who ſeeks truth and inſtruction from the uſe of books, will acknowledge the conviction which he receives with ſome civility towards his inſtructor: whereas this writer ſeems to be of that claſs, who look upon every attempt to inſtruct, as an invaſion on their province, and an affront to their ſufficiency; and make it their buſineſs, therefore, to write againſt all who venture to offer their thoughts to the public, without their licenſe. With this hoſtile temper, he attacks the Author of *the Diſcourſe*, though he had never perſonally offended him; and labors to fix ſome malignity upon his writings, though he owns

them at laſt to be innocent; and when he is driven to the acknowledgement of any truth, does it with ſo ill a grace, as ſhews that he has ſome reaſon ſtill within himſelf to wiſh rather that it had been falſe.

To conclude; there are two or three facts which I would particularly recommend to the reader's conſideration, as being not onely of great weight in the preſent controverſy, but admitted alſo as true, by all the adverſaries of the *Introductory Diſcourſe*.

1*ſt*, That a great part of the primitive miracles, and eſpecially thoſe of the fourth century, were mere fictions, contrived and impoſed by the crafty upon the credulous part of the Chriſtians of that age.

2*dly*, That if all the miracles of all ages, after the Apoſtles, were found to be of the ſame ſtamp, the authority of the Goſpel could not be ſhaken by it.

3*dly*, That at the time of the Reformation, the onely time in all hiſtory when the miracles of the Church were freely examined by Chriſtians themſelves, they were all found to be falſe.

Now a proper attention to theſe facts, and the conſequences of them, muſt be ſufficient, one would think, to ſuperſede all farther diſpute on this quæſtion; and to convince every ſenſible and unprejudiced reader, of the reaſonableneſs, not onely of ſuſpecting, but of rejecting, all

other miracles, except thoſe of the Scriptures. It is certain, at leaſt, that it muſt expoſe the abſurdity of theſe Zealots, in alarming a Proteſtant nation with apprehenſions of danger, from the free diſcuſſion of an argument, which by their own confeſſion can do no miſchief to any ſyſtem of Chriſtianity, but what is now profeſſed and practiſed by the Church of *Rome*.

REMARKS

ON THE

JESUIT-CABAL.

REMARKS

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JESUIT-CABAL.

WHEN I ſat down to examine this *Defence of Dr. Chapman's Charge*, I could not help amuſing myſelf a while, with the quaintneſs of the *Title-page*; which ſeemed to have undergone ſeveral corrections, and to have coſt the Archdeacon no ſmall pains, before it was reduced to its preſent form. In the firſt Advertiſement, which was given of it, in the public papers, the Title, if my memory does not deceive me, ſtood thus; *The Jeſuit's Cabinet farther opened, &c.* But the notion of opening a Cabinet being vulgar, and what every writer would uſe on ſuch an occaſion, was thought unworthy, it ſeems, of the Archdeacon's erudition, and changed therefore, as we now ſee, into the more recondite phraſe, *of opening a Cabal* [1].

[1] This change however was not made at once, nor would *Cabinet* have ſlipt ſo eaſily into *Cabal*, if it had not been prepared by ſome prævious emendation: and there is reaſon to think, that, in running over all the changes into which it might naturally be reſolved, *Cabala* was his firſt choice, and inſerted accordingly into the

In the latter part alſo of the ſame title, ſome alteration appears to have been made, after the book was ſent to the Preſs: for in the firſt Advertiſement likewiſe, if I remember right, the Author of the Poſtſcript was called *a Scurrilous*, as well as *Declamatory Remarker*; whereas in the publication of it, the word *Scurrilous* is now omitted: from what motive, I cannot ſay; but certainly, not from any ſcruples on the Archdeacon's part: for though his friends might perſuade him, that an expreſſion ſo groſs would be too glaring in the firſt page, yet none of them could reſtrain him, from uſing it with all freedom in the ſecond.

From this ſhort view of the Title-page, let us paſs on to the book itſelf; which I take the liberty to call Dr. *Chapman's:* not becauſe common fame calls it ſo; nor becauſe he had declared a reſolution, of writing and publiſhing *a Defence of his Charge*; but becauſe it is a work of that kind, which nobody could have written but himſelf: becauſe the ſtyle, the matter, and,

Title, while the book was yet in the Preſs; as a word, the beſt adapted to the profundity of his own erudition, as well as to that myſtery of iniquity, which he was going to lay open. For about the middle of his piece, he refers us, as it were, to the Title, ſo reformed, and ſpeaks in expreſs terms of *Father Hardouin's Cabala.* [Def. p. 23.] Yet on more mature deliberation, *Cabala* was finally reduced to *Cabal*; which anſwered more directly to the purpoſe, both of his *Charge and Defence*, and conveyed that very notion, which he there labors to inculcate, of *a number of men*, engaged and confederated in this Jeſuitical plot.

to

to borrow a little of his own language, the whole *figuration and indifferentiſm* of it ſhew *the Jeſuit-Cabal* to be a *Chapman Performance*.

The firſt paragraph will confirm the truth of it, which begins with theſe words. *A late Author, who, for reaſons beſt known to himſelf, did not care for expreſſing his name*, has appeared very captious and ſplenetic againſt the Rev. Dr. *Chapman*. Now would a writer of any judgement begin an anonymous work, with a piece of raillery of this kind, without feeling that it would turn upon himſelf, and ſerve as well, for the exordium of his Adverſary's Reply, as his own Defence? their names are equally ſuppreſſed on both ſides; and for reaſons too beſt known to themſelves; yet there is this difference, that the reaſons of the Author of the Poſtſcript, tho' beſt known to himſelf, may be underſtood likewiſe by others; whereas it would be difficult for Dr. *Chapman* to aſſign any, but his great modeſty, for the concealment of his name; who, from a conſciouſneſs of the public favor, and his own ſuperior merit, can venture to boaſt, in this very paragraph, "of the ſtrength, the ſpirit, "and the perſpicuity, of his *Archidaconal* "*Charge*; and of the honors which have been "paid to him on that account, by ſeveral "diſtinct Aſſemblies of the Clergy: can appeal "to a character, which, it is not poſſible to "hurt, with any man living who knows him; "and promiſe better entertainment to his read-"ers, than his *Scurrilous* Antagoniſt can afford."

But

But whatever his meaning might be, in this firſt ſtroke of his raillery, it happened unluckily for him, that his jeſt was ſpoiled before it was out, and the Poſtſcript had acquired the name of its Author, before the *Jeſuit-Cabal* was yet publiſhed.

In the next ſentence, however, he profeſſes a moſt intimate acquaintance with his anonymous Adverſary, and to know the very inſide of him; and, with the zeal of another St. *Jerom*, declares, that the evil ſpirit, which prompts him to write at this rate, *is exceſſively galled, and ſtung by the fame and ſucceſs of his writings, and cannot bear the approbation with which they have been received; but is ſo full of ſpleen and reſentment, that if he did not give a vent to thoſe paſſions, by this ſcurrility of ſneering*, they would certainly burſt him. In anſwer to which, I can take upon me to affirm with great truth, in the name of Dr. *M*——, the Author of the Poſtſcript; that he has never conceived the leaſt degree of ſpleen from any of his performances, though ſome of them have been publiſhed againſt himſelf, but has conſtantly reaped that pleaſure from them, which a liberal mind will always enjoy, from the works of a dull, conceited, bigotted Adverſary, who had forwardly and petulantly attacked him, to find him deſtitute of every talent, which could recommend them to the public; and to ſee the efforts of his zeal and bigotry in great meaſure defeated, by the dulneſs and perplexity with which he labors to inculcate them. Nor has

Dr.

Dr. *M*—— ever been conſcious, of bearing envy to any man whatſoever, for the ſuperiority of his parts or learning, or, what is more commonly the object of it, his preferments; but finds great reaſon to be content with his preſent ſhare, as well of fortunes as of credit in the world; and to eſteem that competency of both, with which Providence has bleſſed him, and that leiſure, freedom, and independency, which he has always enjoyed, above all the advantages which he might poſſibly have acquired, by giving a more ambitious turn to his Life and Studies. And he ſhould think more contemptibly of himſelf, than even his enemies affect to do, and that he had ſpent his time and pains to very little purpoſe, if at his years, and in his circumſtances, he had ſuffered it to be in the power, I will not ſay, of a little Archdeacon, but of a late great Archbiſhop, to give any diſturbance to the eaſe and quiet of his mind. The ſole diſguſt, which he can receive from any of them, and that, on the publick account, not on his own, is to ſee them encouraging and inculcating ſuch a ſpirit of ſuperſtition and credulity in a Proteſtant Church, as the Papiſts themſelves would be aſhamed of: and he conſiders it, as the chief credit and comfort of his life, that he has the ſenſe to contemn, and the reſolution to oppoſe, all ſuch attempts, and their Authors, by whatever name or title they may be dignified and diſtinguiſhed.

With

With this view he publiſhed a few remarks on Dr. *Chapman's Archidiaconal Charge*, which, inſtead of galling, had given him the pleaſure of laughing at it more heartily, than any compoſition of this kind, which he had ever ſeen, as being, of all others, the moſt elaborately ridiculous. Nor was it the purpoſe of thoſe remarks, to caſt *a blemiſh*, as he intimates, on his envied fame, but to do a piece of juſtice to the real merit both of the *Charge* and its Author, by that beſt and gentleſt method of correction, which nature has ordained in ſuch a caſe, of laughing him down into his proper rank and character. This was the juſt treatment which his Charge received, not onely from the Author of the Poſtſcript, but from every body elſe: and this Defence of it, I doubt, will hardly deſerve any other. Of which, however, we ſhall be better able to judge, after we have taken a view of thoſe parts of it, which may ſeem to demand a more ſerious regard.

There are two capital points, which he is obliged to make good, if he really means to vindicate his *Charge* from the exceptions of *the Poſtſcript*.

1ſt, That *Father Harduin's plot* has been carried on with great ſucceſs for half a century paſt, and ſpread its infection far and wide, ſo as to be threatening the greateſt danger, and working incredible miſchief at this very time, to the religion, learning, and liberty of all Proteſtants.

2dly,

2dly, That the writings and authority of St. *Jerom* are of peculiar ſervice, to confirm the religion of Proteſtants, in oppoſition to the preſent worſhip and religion of the Papiſts.

As to the firſt of theſe points, which is the principal ſubject of his *Charge*, the diſpute between us is, not about the natural tendency of the Jeſuit's ſcheme; or the miſchiefs, which it might have wrought, if it had met with a general reception in the world; or the ſentiments of a few particular men, or the private wiſhes of the whole body of the Jeſuits, concerning it; but the ſole quæſtion is, whether it has ever found ſuch a degree of credit, and been carried ſo far into execution, as to create any real danger, or to work any actual miſchief to the Proteſtant cauſe, in any country whatſoever, and eſpecially in *England*, where this alarm was given.

This, I ſay, is the ſingle point in the diſpute: yet when we come to examine, what new light the Archdeacon has produced, towards clearing up this quæſtion of fact, we find nothing more in his *Defence*, than what we had ſeen before in his charge; a cloud of authorities, without any weight; an oſtentation of learning, without ſenſe; his affirmations refuted by his conceſſions; till the ſumm of his defence is not onely reduced to nothing, but the balance turned againſt himſelf; as every one muſt ſee, who will take the pains to caſt up the account, and weigh

" rence of it, and as he believes, with great " ſincerity and truth [1]."

From this abſtract of what he has affirmed on the one ſide, and granted on the other, the reader will ſee at once, that his affirmative proofs are infinitely overbalanced by his negative conceſſions.

He will ſee, that the ſolemn and ſincere proteſtation of all the Superiors of the Jeſuits, muſt far outweigh *the Licenſe of a Provincial*, a mere matter of form; and reaching no farther, than to teſtify the conſiſteney of the Scheme with the *Catholic faith and good manners.*

That the loud remonſtrances of five or ſix Biſhops would have a greater effect, than the hints onely of a ſingle Cardinal.

That the general conſent of the Critics and Scholars of all countries and ſects, *Jeſuits*, *Benedictins*, *Sorboniſts*, and ſeveral other Orders, in *France* and *Italy*, with all the men of learning in *Rome*, is of much greater authority, than the opinions of ſeven or eight private men, of what rank or condition ſoever. In ſhort, he will ſee, I ſay, at once, that neither the Archdeacon's *Charge* nor *Defence*, can have any thing rational or ſolid in it, or worthy of any other treatment, but what it has met with, of being contemned and laughed at by all men of ſober ſenſe. For ſhould we wave all his conceſſions, and refer the diſpute to the ſole merit of his poſitive teſtimonies; we ſhall find them utterly trifling and

[1] See Charge, p. 11, 20. Def. p. 5, 6, 10, 18, 24, &c.

imper-

impertinent, and of no ſignificancy at all towards the confirmation of his argument; amounting, as we have ſeen, to nothing more than this, *that all people admired the great parts and erudition of Father Harduin, and ſome few, here and there,* of leſs learning, yet as much enthuſiaſm perhaps, ſeemed alſo to approve his Scheme. And was any Scheme ever publiſhed by a man of reputation, how extravagant and chimerical ſoever, which had not the luck to find ſome admirers, and to ſtrike the fancy of a few, as wrong-headed and wild as the Author himſelf? yet in the preſent caſe, it is very remarkable, that, in *England*, where this alarm was given, not ſo much as a ſingle perſon has ever been ſaid, or ſuſpected, to have paid the leaſt regard to it.

But let us go ſtill farther, and grant the Archdeacon much more, than he can either claim or deſire for the advantage of his cauſe, that the whole Romiſh Church is unanimous and zealous in the defence of *Harduin's* Scheme; yet even on this hypotheſis, it would be ridiculous, to talk of any particular danger or miſchief from it to Proteſtants, while they continue firm and united in their contempt of it; as it is evident from fact and experience: for inſtance; there are no articles of Popery ſo univerſally profeſſed in that Church, as the *Supremacy of the Pope*, and *Tranſubſtantiation*; nor any, ſo directly fatal to Proteſtantiſm, wherever they are received in any country: but though they are enforced by

the whole united power of the Romiſh Church, and with many ſubtil arguments both from reaſon and Scripture, yet Proteſtants are under no particular alarm, nor think themſelves in any immediate danger on that account; becauſe they have the ſenſe and learning to diſcern the abſurdity of them, and their miſchievous effects on Society in general, as well as on the Proteſtant religion in particular. Much leſs can they apprehend any harm from the Jeſuit's whim, which, if it had not been too extravagant, might indeed have raiſed a party for it among the Romaniſts, by its tendency to advance the power of the Pope and the Church, but has no relation whatſoever to Proteſtants; nor any thing in it, that could invite any party or Sect of that profeſſion to embrace it.

Should we ſuppoſe then, that the Papiſts were either divided about it, or united in its defence; the ſole effect, which could reaſonably be expected in either caſe, would finally turn to the hurt, not of Proteſtantiſm, but of Popery itſelf. For by creating a diviſion in that Church, it muſt in ſome meaſure weaken the ſtrength of the whole; or by uniting the whole in its ſupport, would gradually reduce it again to that ſtate of ignorance and implicit credulity, from which our Anceſtors were delivered by the Reformation; and by reſtraining the learning and religion of their Clergy, to Church-traditions, Canons, and Papal decrees, would render them onely leſs formidable, and more contemptible

to

to the Proteſtants. To alarm us therefore with a Scheme, which, though calculated to ſerve ſome particular purpoſes of Popery, was yet found too chimerical by Papiſts themſelves, to be applied to any purpoſe, is as contradictory to common ſenſe and reaſon, as the abſurd conceit of the Jeſuit on which it is grounded.

The Archdeacon, however, takes great pains to ſhew, that the Proteſtants abroad made vehement outcries againſt it, as *a refinement of the whole Jeſuitical order*, and dangerous conſequently to their religion. And it is not to be wondered at, that a Scheme of that nature, publiſhed by a man of *Harduin's* character, ſhould at firſt create a ſuſpicion among Proteſtants, of being more deeply rooted and ſtrongly ſupported, than it afterwards appeared to be: or till *ſome good men* among them, as the Archdeacon ſays, perceived it to be *too extravagant to do any miſchief* [1]. Yet, notwithſtanding the authority of theſe *good men*, there were others, it ſeems, not ſo good perhaps, yet more ſagacious, who continued ſtill to cry out againſt it as loudly as ever. Nor is this likewiſe ſtrange, that in the Proteſtant countries abroad, there ſhould be a ſort of men, whom we frequently ſee at home, who, from motives of vanity, or intereſt, or ambition, yet under a maſk always of religion, are catching all occaſions of recommending themſelves to public fame and honors, by an affected oſtentation of their zeal, and learning, and ſer-

[1] See Charge, p. 20.

vices to the Church: and it is eaſy to imagine, how the example of that *late great ornament of Berlin*, Mr. *La Croze*, whoſe teſtimony makes ſuch a figure in this Defence, might excite the zeal and emulation of the *Great Archdeacon of Sudbury*, and ſuggeſt to him the plan, and ſubject of his Charge.

But though he has offered nothing in this Defence, which, in any light or view, tends to confirm the argument of his Charge; yet it is curious to obſerve, that he makes frequent uſe of ſeveral topics, which directly overthrow it.

For example, in demonſtrating the great danger of *Harduin's* Scheme, he often reminds us, how all the Proteſtants, from the beginning to this day, have conſtantly decried and rejected it. Now if in any of thoſe Aſſemblies of the Clergy to which his *Charge* was addreſſed, any one had riſen up in oppoſition to him, with intent to calm thoſe terrors which he had been infuſing, what could he have ſaid more effectual to allay them, than what the Archdeacon had applied to excite them? By aſſuring his Reverend brethren, "that whatever he had been declaring "to them with ſo much ſolemnity concerning "the dangers of the plot, they need not be un-"der any concern or alarm about it: for tho' "the *Romaniſts* might in ſome meaſure be di-"vided about it, the *Proteſtants* were all firm "to a man, in their contempt and rejection of "it: that half a century was now paſt, in which "it had been exerting all its force, without

"making

" making the leaſt impreſſion on any Proteſtant " Church or Sect whatſoever: that in *England* " eſpecially, where this alarm was now given, " not a ſingle ſoul was ever ſuſpected of being " tainted with it in any degree: that their own " ignorance of this pretended danger was a ſure " proof that there was really none; and that it " was a groſs inſult upon the ſenſe, the judge- " ment, and the vigilance of the *Engliſh* Cler- " gy, to talk to them with ſuch aſſurance of a " deſperate plot, and *the incredible miſchiefs* " which it had been working to their religion " for ſo many years, and which none of them " all that time, had either the ſagacity to diſ- " cover, or the zeal to oppoſe, but their worthy " Archdeacon. That they ſhould reflect on " what he himſelf had told them in this very " *Charge*, how the plot could never obtain its " end, *till all the writers and monuments of Anti-* " *quity, which obſtructed it, were cancelled and ex-* " *terminated*; *and till the Jeſuits, by their arts,* " *had diffuſed a general neglect and diſregard of* " *them among the Proteſtants* [1]. That not one " of all thoſe ancient writers had yet been can- " celled, nor the leaſt diſregard to them diffuſ- " ed by Jeſuitical arts, through any Proteſtant " country: whence it was evident to every man " of ſenſe, that the plot had utterly miſcarried " from the very beginning, and that they were " as remote from any dangers of it at this day, " as their Fathers had been before them, and

[1] See Charge, p. 9.

" in ſhort, that, from the firſt to the laſt, there " never was, nor ever could be, any danger in " it at all."

If this alone, I ſay, had been urged in anſwer to his Charge, at the time when it was delivered, as it might have been with the ſtricteſt truth, it muſt needs have convinced the audience, that all the terrors with which the Archdeacon had been alarming them, were but affected or imaginary, and his tragical repreſentation of them a mere farce and piece of mockery, which the experience of fifty years, and of all Proteſtant Churches, had utterly confuted.

Again, we may obſerve, both from his *Charge and the Defence* of it, that *the Critics, the ſcholars, and the learned*, are ſuppoſed by him in general, to conſider the Jeſuit's Scheme as *an extravagant, impracticable, and ſenſeleſs whim* [1], which is ſufficient likewiſe of itſelf, to refute all pretence of danger from it. For if the learned be againſt it, who can be for it? The ſucceſs of it muſt neceſſarily depend on the judgement of the learned; being a project of that kind, which the multitude can have no notion of, but from their teſtimony and recommendation. If it had offered to the public ſome refined point of doctrine, or principle of devotion, proper to excite a ſpirit of fanaticiſm or enthuſiaſm in weak and pious Chriſtians, it might indeed have reached to the populace, and proved dangerous in the iſſue to the peace of our Church: but as it is a

[1] Def. p. 5, 6, &c.

quæſtion

quæſtion of dry criticiſm, without any ſuch charm in it, and which learning alone muſt decide, the Proteſtants cannot poſſibly receive any hurt from it, till it be firſt authoriſed by the men of ſenſe and learning of their own profeſſion.

Yet the Archdeacon cannot help perſuading himſelf, that the very populace are all attentive, and taking part in this diſpute: for when Dr. *M——n* treats the Jeſuit's Scheme as a *ſilly whim*, and worthy onely to be laughed at by men of ſenſe; he reproves him with his uſual gravity, and ſays, *that though he is ſo ignorant himſelf to be thus deluded, he muſt not expect, that even the multitude with us, are now to be ſo cajoled and blinded* [1]. For *now*, ſince his *Charge* is made public, he fancies, without doubt, that it is to be found on every ſtall in *London*; and that every ſoul, who can read, is let into the Secret of *Harduin's plot*, and admiring *the ſtrength, and ſpirit, and perſpicuity* of language, in which he has laid open all the dark deſigns, and *incredible miſchiefs*, of this *Jeſuit-Cabal*.

I have hitherto been attempting to ſhew, how all his proofs and evidences of the plot tend onely to contradict his own account of it: yet I have one teſtimony againſt it ſtill behind, which he will own to be of more weight than all the reſt; I mean the authority of his own dear Self: who, in one of his books, publiſhed ſome years ago, taking occaſion to ſpeak of *Father*

[1] Def. p. 14.

Harduin's Scheme, declares it to be both *paradoxical and inſignificant* [1]. Such was his opinion of it, before he had cooked up the plan of his *Charge*. But the *inſignificancy* of the thing, which would have diſcouraged any other man from meddling with it, was the very motive which prompted the Archdeacon to take it for his theme. He knew, that he could never diſplay his wit and eloquence with ſuch advantage, as by raiſing wonders out of nothing, and from an *inſignificant paradox*, extorting the thanks and applauſes of *ſeveral diſtinct aſſemblies of the Clergy*.

Being aware however, that he might be driven to give up the original Scheme of the Jeſuit, as *ſtale and obſolete*, he had projected a retreat, to which he now recurs, and inſiſts, *that one part of his ſtory is ſo far from being ſtale, that it never came to light till* 1733, *and* 1741. Strange! that it ſhould twice come to light within the compaſs of eight years, yet want to be brought to light a third time within five years more. But ſo it was, that *no advice or account had ever been given of it in the Engliſh tongue*, as he tells us, *by any one before himſelf, not even by the late ingenious improvers of M. Bayle's Dictionary* [2]. Here then he takes heart again, and begins to plume himſelf as much as ever, on the diſcovery of a ſecond plot, "more directly ſubſervient, "he ſays, to the Popiſh cauſe, and more ma- "lignant ſtill to antiquity than the firſt; in con-

[1] Dr. C.'s Euſeb. Vol. I. p. 343. [2] Def. p. 12.

" founding the hiſtory of 800 years, and in the " open proſcription even of the *Roman Digeſt* " and *Codes, both Theodoſian and Juſtinianean*, to " make way for the *Papal Codes* and *Canon Law:* " and moreover, in a general maſſacre of all the " ancient writers and monuments of the Church, " to the middle of the thirteenth century: and " all this concluded with a daring abuſe on the " whole Greek text of the New Teſtament, as a " verſion onely of the Vulgate Latin: which " laſt was to be ſet up as the onely authentic " text of the whole Scripture [1]."

This at laſt was *the Snake in the graſs*, which he talks of; or the fatal and poiſonous part of the Scheme, which had hitherto been kept out of ſight. But when the head of the Snake was cut off, is it not childiſh to make an outcry of danger, becauſe the tail ſeemed ſtill to move? When the original Scheme had ſo long been exploded, and loſt all power of doing miſchief, is it poſſible, that any appendix, or freſh conceit, formed by the ſame Jeſuit, and on the ſame principles, ſhould give any juſt alarm, or excite the attention of men of ſenſe? This new plot came *firſt to light*, he ſays, *in* 1733: let him tell us then, what hurt it has any where done for theſe fourteen years paſt. The capital miſchief which it aims at, and by which alone Proteſtants can be affected, is, to deprive them of their *Greek copies of the New Teſtament*, and to ſlip *the Vulgate Latin* into their hands, as the more authentic text.

[1] Def. p. 13.

Yet

Yet it is certain, not onely, that no Proteſtant Church, but that no ſingle Proteſtant in his ſenſes has ever been induced to ſubmit to ſuch an exchange. Whatever then any Jeſuit, or the whole body of them, may project or wiſh on this article, it muſt be wholly inſignificant to Proteſtants; in whoſe cuſtody the *Greek text* will always reſt ſecure from the danger, of being either privately ſtolen, or forcibly extorted out of their hands.

But as ſilly as all this muſt neceſſarily appear to every ſenſible reader, we find him wonderful elate, on the merit of being the firſt diſcoverer of it; and inſulting his Adverſary upon it with much contempt, "was this too a tale, ſays he, "which deſerved no alarm or regard among our "Clergy? And was this good Remarker ſo "fond of his *ſtales and obſoletes*, for the ſake of "making a little figure with them, that he "could onely attend to what was publiſhed "about forty years ago, and not hearken to the "more recent ſtrokes of the Jeſuit, and paſs "them all over in the moſt profound ſilence? "The very mirror this of Proteſtant candor "and impartiality, towards both the Archdea-"con and the Jeſuit [1]."

But to return to *Father Harduin's* plot. Dr. *M——n* had affirmed of it in the Poſtſcript, that *it was contemned particularly at Rome, as the delirium of a doting Critic.* On which the Archdeacon takes occaſion to animadvert, in ſo re-

[1] Def. p. 13.

fined

fined a ſtrain, both of reaſon and raillery, that I muſt beg leave to tranſcribe the intire paſſage, becauſe no abſtract could poſſibly do juſtice to it. Take it then in his own words:

"As to our Author's particular information "of the great contempt of *Father Harduin at* "*Rome*, as if there his whole Syſtem was treat- "ed, as *a mere delirium of a doting Critic*, it has "no great weight with me in its preſent form, "when I onely look back to ſome former in- "formations, which were given us, of a certain "*fine column near the Capitol at Rome:* nor do I "think, that every man, who is curious in *de-* "*lineating and illuſtrating an old Phallus or Pria-* "*pus*, is immediately to be truſted, for explan- "ing the genuin thoughts of *Italian Monaſtics*, "or *a Roman Conclave*. Some indeed, I know, "ſuch as *Fontanini* and *Quirini*, have talked at "*Rome*, with great freedom and abhorrence of "*Harduin's* projects, and I believe too with "great ſincerity and truth. But others may "talk ſo to a Proteſtant Traveller, or to ſome "tender Catholic conſciences, though privately "among confidents, they may hug and applaud "the Scheme, and ſpur on the moſt vigorous "proſecution of it," &c. [1].

Here we ſee, how the Archdeacon, who never travelled farther, than from his College to *Lambeth*, profeſſes to know, not onely what was ſaid, but what was thought at *Rome*, yet will not allow Dr. *M——n*, who ſpent ſeveral months

[1] P. 23.

in

in that City, to be capable of giving any information, of what he had either ſeen or heard in it. *I know*, ſays he, *that ſuch men as Fontanini and Quirini, talked with great abhorrence of Harduin's projects.* Very familiar truly! one would imagine him to be ſpeaking of his intimate acquaintance. *Fontanini* was an Archbiſhop, of diſtinguiſhed learning and politeneſs, whom Dr. *M——n* ſaw almoſt every day during his ſtay at *Rome*; and, by the advantage of his friendſhip, had the opportunity of many free converſations at his houſe, with perſons of the firſt diſtinction, both for their quality and litterature; and among the reſt, with the Pope now reigning; and after he left *Rome* kept up a correſpondence of letters with him, to the time of his death. But, what relates more to the preſent purpoſe, the character of *Harduin's* plot, which is ſaid in the Poſtſcript, to have obtained at *Rome, of being the delirium of a doting Critic*, is expreſſed in the very words, in which he received it from Monſignor *Fontanini*; whoſe known attachment and relation to that Court muſt perſuade us, that he would not have uſed any language on that ſubject, which could poſſibly give offence there.

But the Archdeacon aſſigns two reaſons, why Dr. *M——n's informations from Rome*, ought not to be credited. Firſt, becauſe the Dr. had given ſome *falſe informations*, it ſeems, before, *concerning a certain fine column near the Capitol.* It puzzled me a while to gueſs, what he could mean by

by this inſinuation: for the Doctor had never given any information about any *column* whatſoever, nor ever heard of any *fine one*, near the *Capitol*, except the *Trajan and Antonin Columns*, which are not far from it. But I found upon recollection, that this dark hint related to a certain antique ſtone, of a Cylindrical form, with the names of about *thirty old Roman Legions* upon it, which Dr. *M——n* had tranſcribed, for the uſe of a former treatiſe, from a printed copy of ſome of the Editors of thoſe antient Inſcriptions: which tranſcript the Archdeacon was pleaſed to cenſure, as incorrect, becauſe it differed from the copies of *the great Boiſſard and Gruter*, as he calls them, and unleſs they were miſtaken, which he could not believe, the Doctor's copy had not given the true reading [1]. But whatever he may believe, or not believe, it is certain, that the one or the other, or both of them, more probably, were miſtaken; becauſe they vary from each other, more than once or twice, in their different copies of the ſame inſcription [2]. Yet whatever difference there may be in any copies, or whatever error in the Doctor's, the ſole purpoſe, for which it was alledged by him, is evidently confirmed by them all.

It is pleaſant however to obſerve, how the Archdeacon, out of a fondneſs for his criticiſm, grew fond of this old Stone, and erected it pre-

[1] See Dr. *Chapman's* Letter annexed to Obſervations on the Epiſtles of Cic. and Brut. p. 427.

[2] Boiſſard. Par. iii. 102. Grut. Inſcr. p. 513.

ſently

in this caſe, than what his great *Boiſſard and Gruter:* than what *Pignorius*, *Begerus*, *Cauſæus*, *Bonanni*, *Montfaucon*, &c. in ſhort, what every man, of what character, country, or religion ſoever, who has publiſhed collections of Antiquities, or undertaken to explane the manners and rites of the Gentile world, had conſtantly done before him. And yet the Doctor, before he entered upon that particular argument, took care to guard himſelf from any juſt cenſure, and obviate all offence to his weaker readers, by premiſing the example, not onely of thoſe learned moderns, but an authority ſtill much greater, even of the Fathers of the Primitive Church, in whoſe words he has happened to explane the very groſſeſt part of his ſubject: ſo that whatever ſhame may be thought due to him, for the *illuſtration of this old Phallus*, it muſt finally reſt upon them.

Such was the ground of the Archdeacon's cenſure, as far as I have been able to diſcover it; but as to the meaning of it, it is not in my power to find it out. All that I can pretend to ſay, of ſuch a medley of ſtrange words, as they are jumbled together in this paragraph, is, that his *fine Column*, *old Phallus*, *Italian Monaſtics*, *and Roman Conclave*, make a compoſition of ſuch *ſtrong*, *ſpirited*, *and perſpicuous* nonſenſe, as no other writer, but with the ſame vivacity of genius, and the ſame profundity of erudition, could poſſibly produce.

After

After he has thus vindicated himſelf, with regard to his diſcovery of the *Jeſuit's plot*, and ſet forth his great ſervices to the public, in alarming us ſo ſeaſonably with the dangers of it, he procedes, to do juſtice alſo to his friends, *the Tunſtalls and the Marklands*, by clearing them from the ſuſpicion of having any ſhare in it. The warmth of his friendſhip would not ſuffer him, to overlook the leaſt touch of mere raillery, on perſons ſo dear to him. He imagined preſently that Dr. *M——n* took them to be real *Loyolites*, and actually engaged with the Jeſuits abroad, and that he was repreſenting them as ſuch to the whole kingdom; upon which, he takes occaſion, to make here a public and ſolemn declaration, *that he had never any thought at all, of impeaching them; that they bear no reſemblance to the true Loyolites*, have none of the marks upon them, *and could not therefore be the object of his caveat* [1]: And from this *outcry againſt them*, as he calls it, he enters into a formal defence of all *the true and ſolid Critics*, whether living or dead, whether of our own or of foreign countries; whom he declares, "*to deſerve love* "*and univerſal eſteem, as the firmeſt ſupports of* "truth and erudition; while thoſe furious "Drawcanſers, who procede not by principles "of criticiſm, but of party and policy, and "would cut off at random, againſt all rules of "true Critique, whole centuries of Authors, ec-"cleſiaſtical and profane, and diffuſe an univer-

[1] Def. p. 25, 26.

" ſal ſcepticiſm, as to monuments of antiquity, " deſerve to be marked out, as peſts to the re- " public of letters [1]."

Since then he has thought fit, to be ſo ſerious, on ſo ſlight an occaſion, I find myſelf obliged to be ſerious too, and to make a declaration alſo in my turn, on the part of Dr. *M——n*; that he had no real intention, any more than the Archdeacon himſelf, to impeach thoſe learned Gentlemen of any plot whatſoever; nor the leaſt deſign to defraud them of that *amiable* character, which they have acquired with ſo much pains and ſtudy, *of true and ſolid Critics.* But as no mortal can know the real motives of action in another; and as the evidence eſpecially of plots, turns not upon intentions, but overt-acts, ſo the whole, which I can declare of them with certainty is; that their late attempts againſt the works of *Cicero*, which bear ſome reſemblance of *the Jeſuit's plot*, and ſeem to flow from the ſame *malign ſpirit againſt the Antients*, have been found upon trial, to be perfectly innocent, and incapable of doing the leaſt hurt to any thing whatſoever; and will conſequently be as little known or regarded by the next generation, as the whimſical conceit of *Harduin* was by the preſent.

We are now come to the ſecond point, which the Archdeacon, as I have ſaid, is obliged to make good, if he would vindicate his *Charge*, from the exceptions of the *Poſtſcript.* He has

[1] P. 26.

declared

declared in that *Charge*, that the antient Fathers of the Church, and eſpecially *the Clements*, *the Chryſoſtoms*, *the Jeroms*, *and the Auſtins*, are *an armoury*, as he calls it, *on the Proteſtant ſide, continually galling the Papiſts in ſome tender part, and expoſing to every common eye, the unſcriptural and unprimitive crudities of the Romiſh principles and practices* [1]. In contradiction to which, it is affirmed by Dr. *M——n* in his *Poſtſcript*, "that "the authority of thoſe very Fathers, as it is "recommended and enforced by the Arch-"deacon, would betray us into Popery; and in "particular, that *Chryſoſtom*, *Jerom*, and *Auſtin*, "had ſeverally taught and practiſed, and warm-"ly recommended to the practice of all Chriſti-"ans, certain rites and doctrines, which, from "their example and authority, are practiſed at "this day by the Romiſh Church, but rejected "by all Proteſtant Churches, *as unſcriptural, ſu-"perſtitious, and idolatrous* [2]."

This is the ſubject of the diſpute between the Author of *the Charge*, and the Author of *the Poſtſcript:* the laſt of whom, in order to cut off all unneceſſary wrangling, and to reduce the controverſy to as ſhort an iſſue, as the nature of a Poſtſcript required, choſe to refer the merit of it to a few facts and inſtances, drawn ſingly from *St. Jerom*, becauſe, of all the Fathers, he perceived him to be the peculiar favorite of the Archdeacon. Now this method of proceding

[1] See Charge, p. 2, 6. [2] Poſtſcript of the Introd. Diſc. p. 68.

is clear and direct, and what every one would chuſe to purſue, who ſeeks nothing but the truth: and, if that had been the Archdeacon's view, he ought to have given a direct anſwer to thoſe facts; or to have balanced them at leaſt by oppoſite facts drawn from the ſame Father, ſtrong and explicit in favor of the Proteſtant cauſe, as it ſtands oppoſed to that of the Papiſts.

But inſtead of this, the whole buſineſs of his *Defence* is, to draw us away from the real ſubject, and to amuſe us with harangues quite foreign to it; "on the reverence due to primitive antiquity; on the authority of the Fathers taken collectively; on the public doctrine of the antient Churches; and particularly, on the admirable abilities, innumerable excellencies, and treaſures of learning to be found in *St. Jerom*; in conſideration of which, all their blemiſhes, failings, and peccancies ought to be overlooked; and whatever they may have dropt of *a Popiſh caſt*, there wants no apology for it, he ſays, nor is there any reaſon to expect, that he ſhould be reſponſible for the errors or imprudences of a *Jerom*, becauſe he is ſuppoſed to be a favorite with him [1]."

From this evaſive way of treating the ſubject, and eluding the force of plain facts, one would be apt to imagine, that he was giving up the quæſtion, and yielding the cauſe to his Adver-

[1] Jeſ. Cabal, p. 34, 36.

ſary: yet far from any ſuch thought, he aſſures us, "that all the facts and inſtances, which have "been or can be produced from *St. Jerom*, or "any of the Fathers, are nothing more than *a* "*few ſlight trimmings of Popery*, which may in- "deed receive ſome countenance from them, "but that he will engage, from thoſe Fathers "alone, effectually to confute all the principal "errors of the Romaniſts [1]." Why does he not do it then, and put an end to the controverſy at once both with them and with me? and why does he chuſe to harangue ſtill at large; neither producing any facts on his own ſide, nor taking notice of thoſe alledged on the other; yet giving his adverſary all the while, no other title, than that of *a Declamatory Remarker*; though he grounds his whole argument on allowed facts, and requires a diſtinct anſwer to them, and refers the deciſion of the cauſe to the merit of that anſwer.

But what is ſtill more ſhameful, he declares, "that he never appealed to any of the Antient "Fathers ſingly, nor in particular to *Chryſoſtom*, "*Jerom*, or *Auſtin*; for knowing well what he "did, he appealed onely to the primitive Fathers "at large, or to the whole body of them taken "collectively, but that inſtead of *the Fathers in* "*general*, which was his expreſſion, the Gentle- "man had ſlipt in, *Chryſoſtom*, *Jerom*, and *Auſtin*, "to whom he did not appeal, nor ever intended "to appeal [2]." And this indeed, if true,

[1] Jef. Cabal, p. 35. [2] Ibid. 33, 34.

muſt needs be thought a ſlippery trick, to put ſuch a change upon the good Archdeacon. Let us inquire then, how the caſe really ſtands; and whether this piece of craft, which he imputes to Dr. *M——n*, be not a proof onely of his greater diſingenuity, and a fiction of his own, contrived to excuſe himſelf from acting that mortifying part, which candor and truth preſcribe, but his pride cannot ſubmit to, of acknowledging himſelf confuted.

In the beginning of his *Archiadiaconal Charge*, where he opens the general plan of Father *Harduin's plot*, he ſpeaks indeed, in general, of the *ancient Fathers*, as deſtined to deſtruction by that Jeſuit, on account of their ſervices to the Proteſtant cauſe [1]. Then, in deſcribing the terrible havock which the plot had made among the writers of Antiquity, both Greek and Latin, he tells us, that *this was onely the introduction to the more daring ſtroke, by which the Clements, the Chryſoſtoms, the Jeroms, and the Auſtins, were to fall next in the Maſſacre, as being too eloquent and primitive for a Jeſuit's palate* [2]. And laſtly, when he comes to ſet forth the probability of its ſucceſs, he ſays, *that the libertines and ſceptics would of courſe rejoice in it, and give up even their favorites, Virgil and Horace, &c. on condition onely that the Jeroms might be ſacrificed with them* [3]. Thus he firſt mentions *the ancient Fathers at large, as an armoury on the Proteſtant ſide*; then ſpecifies what particular Fathers he means, as

[1] Charge, p. 2. [2] Ib. p. 6. [3] Ib. 22.

the moſt obnoxious on that account to the Jeſuit; and laſtly, takes occaſion to ſignify, that, of the four, whom he ſo ſpecifies, *Jerom* was the moſt eminently and univerſally odious to all the enemies of Proteſtantiſm, both *Papiſts and Sceptics*.

This is his whole account of the ancient Fathers, with regard to their being *an armoury on the Proteſtant ſide:* and could any one, who was diſpoſed to conteſt it with him, act more candidly and pertinently, than by referring the diſpute, to the character of that ſingle Father, on whom he himſelf lays the greateſt ſtreſs? Or could any one, on the other hand, act more weakly and diſingenuouſly, than he has done in the preſent caſe, by diſclaiming an appeal to *any of the ancient Fathers ſingly?* For, in our controverſy with the Papiſts, the whole collective body of them could not poſſibly have any weight, if each of them, taken ſingly, be found to have none at all: and if he dares not truſt his cauſe to thoſe particular Fathers, whom he himſelf has diſtinguiſhed, *as the peculiar armoury of Proteſtants*, and declared, *to be grievous thorns in the ſides of the Papiſts* [1], it is childiſh to pretend, that any acceſſion of the reſt, who are leſs uſeful to us, and leſs grievous to our enemies, could add any new ſtrength to it. Yet thus he ſhuffles on; chuſing to recur rather to any ſhift, and to deny even what he has ſaid, than to give a di-

[1] Jeſ. Cabal, p. 35.

rect anſwer to facts, which would expoſe the folly and bigotry of his principles.

And to divert the attention of the reader from the merits of the cauſe, and raiſe his indignation at the ſame time againſt Dr. *M*——*n*, he makes a wretched outcry againſt him, for "disfigur-" ing and depreciating the virtues and abilities " of the ancient Fathers; exaggerating their " failings and peccancies; caſting the worſt " conſtruction on their actions and ſayings; " painting them malignantly in the moſt hide-" ous colors of folly, ſuperſtition, or knavery; " and putting them to a worſe torture, than their " Heathen Perſecutors had ever done, and to a " fiery trial, which no writers in the world had " ever ſuffered [1];" with a great deal more of the ſame declamatory ſtuff, for which Dr. *M*——*n* has given no other occaſion, than by attempting to ſhew, from expreſs teſtimonies and inſtances drawn from thoſe Fathers, that their primitive practices and principles tend to confirm the preſent doctrines and worſhip of the Romiſh Church.

This is a pure quæſtion of fact, which has no relation to their virtues or abilities, or any other part of their character, than what is neceſſarily demonſtrated by thoſe ſame inſtances, collected from their works, on which the quæſtion itſelf depends. For example, if, in the courſe of our argument, they are found to affirm, either from their own knowledge or the report of

[1] Jeſ. Cabal, 42, 43.

others,

others, things manifeſtly falſe and utterly incredible; what elſe can we poſſibly think, or ſay of them, but that, *if they believed ſuch things, they were groſsly credulous; if not, were crafty or intereſted, in impoſing the belief of them upon others?* And how ſhining ſoever their abilities may be, this is no calumny, no exaggeration, no torture or fiery trial, but ſuch a treatment of them, as juſtice and reaſon require, and what all writers have ever ſuffered and ought to ſuffer: and whoever forms a judgement of any Author, from any other principle, than what is grounded on the teſtimony of his writings, muſt neceſſarily judge from prejudice or party, or ſome other motive, which does not flow from the love of truth.

The Archdeacon, however, though he does not chuſe to give any direct anſwer to thoſe particular facts, which are alledged againſt him from St. *Jerom*, takes no ſmall pains to clear the ancient Fathers in general, from the charge urged againſt them, of being the Authors of thoſe *principal corruptions*, which are practiſed at this day by the Romaniſts, and condemned by the Proteſtants, as *unſcriptural and ſuperſtitious*. Which corruptions he has collected from *the Introductory Diſcourſe* into the eight following articles: 1. *The inſtitution of Monkery.* 2. *The worſhip of reliques.* 3. *Invocation of Saints.* 4. *Prayers for the dead.* 5. *The ſuperſtitious uſe of Images.* 6. *Of the Sacrament.* 7. *Of the Sign of the Croſs.* 8. *Of conſecrated Oil* [1].

[1] Jeſ. Cabal, p. 28.

This

This poor liſt of primitive corruptions, and its eight articles, our Proteſtant Archdeacon derides, as trifling and impertinent; and of no conſequence at all to us, whether they were practiſed or not, either by the Ancient or Modern Church of *Rome*. *Theſe*, ſays he, *are all the great inſtances of agreement, which our Author can find between Popery and Antiquity: and what are theſe? Why, the facts and inſtances, which have been anſwered by Proteſtants over and over* [1]. And to juſtify his contempt of them, he touches here and there the chief of thoſe arguments, which have ſo often been urged in anſwer to them. 1. *That though there are ſeveral paſſages in the Fathers, which ſeem to have a Popiſh caſt, and to look a little Popiſhly affected, yet it may bear a diſpute, as it has often done, whether the caſes on both ſides be ſimilar* [2]. 2. *That it is another quæſtion, whether the Primitive Churches are chargeable, in theſe articles, with any leaven of Romiſh Superſtition at all. Nay, he is ſure, that we may appeal, in theſe very articles, to the practice of the ancient Churches, againſt the Church of Rome* [3]. 3. *That the uſages of this kind are really nothing to the mimickry and fopperies of the later Popiſh rituals* [4]. 4. *That the articles here charged upon the Primitive Fathers, are not the principal corruptions of Popery; nor in truth any Popery at all, but onely a few trimmings of Popery* [5].

[1] Jeſ. Cabal, p. 28. [2] Ib. 33, 35, 36. [3] Ib. 29. [4] Ib. 32. [5] Ib. 29, 35.

But

But if Popery, as he contends, was not yet in being, how could the Fathers add *trimmings* to it? Or if his meaning be, that they *trimmed up Chriſtianity into the form and dreſs of Popery*; the onely ſenſe that his words naturally convey, I ſhall readily agree with him, and cut ſhort the diſpute. But inſtead of allowing any thing ſo candid or ſenſible, he preſents us with a different picture of Popery, and a genuin liſt of *its principal corruptions and crying abominations*, as he calls them, and defies any man to ſhew, *that ſo much as one of theſe ever appeared in any Chriſtian Church before A.D.* 440 [1]. Yet, ſhould we grant all this, and whatever he can ſay of the ſame kind, to be true, it is nothing to the purpoſe, as the reader will eaſily perceive, by reflecting onely on the genuin nature of Popery, and the real ſtate of our preſent quæſtion.

For it muſt be remembered, that Popery is a ſyſtem of a very complex and comprehenſive kind, which could not poſſibly be formed at once, or brought to maturity, but by the gradual improvements of ſucceſſive ages. The Primitive Fathers, and eſpecially thoſe of the fourth Century, were the Founders of it; ſketched out the plan, laid a ſure foundation, raiſed a great part of the Fabrick, and left ſufficient funds and materials, for carrying on the reſt to its full perfection. And we might with as much reaſon deny, that *Romulus*, and the Primitive Kings, who ſucceeded him, were the

[1] Jeſ. Cabal, 27, 28.

founders

founders of the ancient ſtate of *Heathen Rome*, becauſe they did not raiſe it to that heighth of power which it afterwards reached; as that the primitive Fathers were the founders of the preſent ſtate of *Popiſh Rome*, becauſe they left a part of their work to be completed by their Succeſſors. In both caſes, the foundations were ſo effectually laid, and the plan carried ſo far into execution, that the reſt would ſucceed of courſe, if it was not totally deſerted; and from cauſes and principles, of a kind ſomewhat ſimilar. For the Kings of old *Rome*, that they might ſecure their infant ſtate, and enlarge its dominion, contrived ſuch a ſyſtem of laws and religious rites as would naturally excite a kind of fanatical zeal and enthuſiaſtic fondneſs for them in the people, whom they trained at the ſame time in ſuch bodily exerciſes, as were proper to confirm both their ſtrength and their courage: by the united force of which principles, the Heathen world became ſubject to the power of that Republic. Thus alſo the Primitive Fathers, by the invention of certain rites and methods of devotion, with a ſeverity of bodily exerciſes, and peculiar rules of life, which carried a form of ſanctity, and were enforced by a pretence of miracles, infuſed into the multitude a ſpirit of zeal and ſuperſtition, too impetuous to be checked, by the oppoſition of calm reaſon, which gradually ſubjected the Chriſtian world to the dominion of popiſh *Rome*.

This

This is a ſhort ſketch of the riſe and progreſs of Popery. It drew it's birth from the primitive ages of the Church; was nurſed by the Fathers of the ſame ages, eſpecially of the fourth Century, and attained gradually to its preſent maturity, by the help chiefly of thoſe articles, above recited, which were invented for that purpoſe, and zealouſly propagated by the ſame Fathers. The Archdeacon however is ſure, *that even in theſe articles, we may appeal to the ancient Churches in oppoſition to the Romiſh Church*; and to prove the truth of what he ſays, has taken the pains to ſhew, in every one of them, how far the practice of the primitive Churches was different from the preſent practice of *Rome:* thro' all which therefore, it will be neceſſary for me to follow him, with a remark or two on each particular article.

The Subſtance of what he has thought fit to declare on the ſubject of theſe ſeveral articles, is as follows:

1. *That there were no Monks in the Church for near three hundred years; and when they were introduced, they were under no Popiſh vows or bonds; nor encroached on the rights of the Biſhops and Clergy; nor held eſtates in mortmain; nor were the creatures and tools of the Popes of Rome.*

The reader will obſerve, that though our diſpute principally turns on *the rites and doctrines of the fourth century*, which the Archdeacon has undertaken to vindicate, from a conformity with the preſent Superſtitions of *Rome*, yet

yet in this firſt article of *Monkery*, he owns it to have been introduced even in the third century; with this difference onely, *that it was not yet under any Popiſh vows; nor encroached on the rights of the Biſhops; nor engroſſed eſtates; nor was a tool to the Popes.* Now the fact is this, as it is repreſented by the Fathers themſelves, that towards the end of the fourth century, there was ſuch an amazing increaſe of the Monkiſh Order, through all parts of the Chriſtian world, as makes it reaſonable to believe, that there were greater numbers of Monks in the Church, in proportion to the extent of Chriſtendom at that time, than are to be found in it even at this. Which was wholly owing to the zeal of thoſe Fathers, who made it their buſineſs to recommend and extol the Monaſtic ſtate, as the perfection of a Chriſtian life, and the very pattern of an heavenly one. Theſe Monks lived alſo then, as they do now, in Monaſteries, founded for their ſole uſe and reception, and under a ſolemn profeſſion, or vow of perpetual chaſtity; voluntary, as we may imagine, at firſt; till, by their frequent violations of it, they were gradually tied down by more ſtrict and forcible reſtraints. And if they did not immediately *encroach on the rights of others, and engroſs eſtates, or become tools of the Popes*; yet ſuch effects were ſure to follow from the very nature of their inſtitution: for it is not poſſible, that ſuch numerous ſocieties of beggarly, crafty, ambitious ſpirits, recommended by a reputation of wonderful

derful ſanctity, could long ſubſiſt without acquiring both rights and eſtates, and attaching themſelves to that power, which was the beſt able to protect them in ſuch uſurpations. And we find accordingly, that they made it their care, from the very beginning, to ſeduce the heirs of rich families into their Monaſteries, againſt the will, and to the utmoſt grief, of their parents, and to conceal them there, from the knowledge and ſearch of their friends. Nor are we to ſuppoſe, that any of their later encroachments are derived from any written ſtatutes or rules, by which modern Monks are governed, in diſtinction from the ancient, but from ſuch arts onely, as experience would teach of courſe, and tacitly preſcribe to all ſocieties of the ſame kind.

2. *That there were no invocations of Saints or Angels in the three firſt centuries; and even in the fourth, the addreſſes to them, were more like rhetorical Apoſtrophes (ſuch as that of Dr. M—— n to Dr. Woodward) than formal petitions: and no prayers to them were admitted in the public Offices of the Church, before A. D.* 500.

On this article it is allowed by the Archdeacon, that in the fourth century, ſuch Addreſſes were made to Saints and Angels, and ſuch religious honors paid to them, which, within a few generations after, produced a direct worſhip, and *a formule of prayers to them in the common Liturgies of the Church.* But here he has met with a lucky occaſion, as he fancies, of diſtinguiſhing

guiſhing all this away, and giving a ſtroke at the ſame time to Dr. *M——n*, which muſt needs ſtrike him dumb, by ſhewing, that the addreſſes paid to Saints, in the fourth century, were nothing more, than *ſuch rhetorical Apoſtrophes*, as the Doctor himſelf had applied, in a certain latin ſpeech, to his deceaſed friend Dr. *Woodward*. As if ſuch little attempts of Oratory, or ſallies of fancy, made to enliven a latin oration, in an Aſſembly of Scholars, could bear any analogy to the religious addreſſes paid to Saints, on bended knees and in a ſupplicant poſture, in Churches dedicated to their names, and before their Altars, and their reliques, according to the manner of that century. But whatever wit or ſmartneſs there may be in the application, it is wholly borrowed from a printed pamphlet, in which the ſame turn is given to the *Saint-worſhip* of thoſe primitive ages.

3. *That the Popiſh worſhip of reliques cannot be found in the Orders of the Church, before the middle of the fourth century: and that it was not made an article of faith, and added to the Apoſtle's Creed, till the time of Pope Pius IVth: a preſumption unknown to the Antient Churches.*

Here again we find an identity of practice, in the primitive Church of the fourth century, and the preſent Church of *Rome*, in one of the moſt offenſive and groſſeſt ſuperſtitions of all Popery. Which though not formally declared to be *an article of faith*, in thoſe ancient times, yet was believed as firmly, and had the ſame effect,

as

as *an article of faith*, in all times, or it could not otherwiſe have obtained ſo univerſal an eſtabliſhment. And, to ſay the truth, a worſhip confirmed by a perpetual ſucceſſion of miracles, had a juſt claim to be treated as ſuch, in all ages and Churches, where thoſe miracles were believed to be true.

4. *That the ſuperſtitious uſe of Images was never heard of in the primitive times; nor can any one Father of the fourth century be produced to favor it.*

It is certain however, that *Images* were introduced into the Churches in the fourth century, and, as St. *Auſtin* expreſly declares, found *many adorers of them* in that age [1]. And in the following ages, it is notorious, that the worſhip of them was practiſed and propagated by all the Fathers. Yet in the fourth century I have met with a ſtory, which ſeems to confute the Archdeacon's peremptory aſſertion, on this article, by the authority of one of the moſt illuſtrious Fathers of that time, even *the great St. Baſil.* The ſtory is this, " that as that venerable Fa-
" ther was fervently praying before *the Image of*
" *the bleſſed Virgin*, to which there was annexed
" alſo a picture of *St. Mercurius the Martyr*, he
" received a divine revelation from the picture
" of that Saint, by which it was ſignified to him,
" that *Julian the Apoſtate*, for whoſe deſtruction
" he was then particularly putting up his pray-

[1] See Introd. Diſc. p. 21.

" ers, was in that very inſtant of time actually " deſtroyed [1]."

5. *That the ſuperſtitious abuſes of the Sacrament of the Euchariſt, which are charged in the Introductory Diſcourſe, on the Fathers of the fourth century, are tales quite foreign to the purpoſe; of mixing the water with wine, and ſending the conſecrated elements to the abſent, and the like: ſince no Popiſh diſtinction of ſeven Sacraments; no Tranſubſtantiation; adoration of the Hoſt, and propitiatory Sacrifices of the Maſs are brought to light from that quarter.*

Yet beſides thoſe tales, which he calls foreign to the purpoſe, it is ſhewn in the ſame place, though he omits to take notice of it, that ſuch notions and uſages prevailed, in that age, with regard to this Sacrament, as were but very little ſhort of the Popiſh rites and doctrines juſt ſpecified; and within a few ages afterwards actually produced them. For example, this Sacrament was then held to be *a tremendous myſtery, dreadful even to Angels*; and conſtantly ſtyled *the Sacrifice of the body and blood of Chriſt*, and *offered up as ſuch, both for the dead and the living, over the tombs and aſhes of departed Saints and Martyrs:* which was either the ſame thing, with what is now called the *propitiatory Sacrifice of the Maſs*, or at leaſt a very near approach to it. The conſecrated bread likewiſe, was *locked up in boxes*, and carried about by private Chriſtians, *as a charm, or preſervative*

[2] Joh. Damaſcen. Op. T. i. p. 327. E. Edit. Par.

againſt

againſt all dangers, and believed to work miracles, and *drive Devils out of haunted houſes*; and in ſhort, to perform ſuch aſtoniſhing wonders, that it was not poſſible to take it any longer for mere bread, but ſomething apparently divine and worthy of adoration; and tranſubſtantiated conſequently into the real body of Chriſt, for nothing elſe could naturally flow from theſe principles and practices of the fourth century.

6. *That prayers for the dead were in uſe indeed among the primitive Chriſtians; but not ſuch, as the Papiſts now uſe, for the relief of Souls in Purgatory; becauſe the doctrine of a Purgatory was not eſtabliſhed till after the fourth century: and the teſtimonies alledged in favor of it, from Tertullian and Origen, were onely the private opinions of thoſe Fathers, not the general doctrine of the Church.*

Here the ſuperſtitious practice of *praying for the dead*, is acknowledged to have been uſed by the Primitive Chriſtians, as it certainly was, from the earlieſt ages, after the days of the Apoſtles. The purpoſe of it, as it is declared by *Tertullian* and *Origen*, was to procure ſome relief and *refreſhment to departed Souls, in an intermediate ſtate of expiatory pains* [1]. And though the Church had not yet publickly avowed the doctrine of ſuch *a purgatorial* ſtate, yet from the general practice *of praying for the dead*, we may certainly infer a general perſuaſion of it, as the principle, on which the practice itſelf

[1] Introd. Diſc. 18, 19.

was grounded. Which ſeems even demonſtrable, not onely from the teſtimonies of *Tertullian* and *Origen*, but from the actual eſtabliſhment of *a Purgatory*, which within a ſhort time after was openly avowed, as the doctrine of the Catholic Church. Let the Archdeacon therefore invent what diſtinctions he pleaſes, it will be evident to all men of ſenſe, that *the doctrine of a Purgatory*, with all the lucrative effects, which have ſince been derived from it to the Popiſh Church, was directly founded on the uſages of the fourth century.

7. *That the ill uſes of the Sign of the Croſs, and of oil, were unknown to the Paſtors and offices of the Church for near three hundred years. In baptiſm indeed, and in ſickneſs, they had a ceremony of anointing with oil, and hoped in ſome inſtances for miraculous cures from it; yet theſe and other primitive uſages of the ſame kind were nothing to the mimickry and fopperies of the later Popiſh rituals.*

In theſe two laſt articles, all that he pretends to declare is, that the abuſes of them were unknown to the primitive Church for near three hundred years; whereas his argument required, that they ſhould have continued unknown to the end at leaſt of four hundred. Yet from his own account of them, we may collect, that ſuch abuſes of them were actually introduced within theſe three hundred years, as would neceſſarily create all the reſt. For inſtance, *they anointed ſick perſons with oil*, in the primitive Church, and expected *miraculous cures* from it. They do the

the very ſame thing at this day in the Romiſh Church, and with the ſame expectation: and in both Churches, miracles are ſaid to be wrought by it, as the ground of that expectation. The onely difference is, *that the Romiſh Church has made a Sacrament of this Unction, which the Primitive Church never thought of.* But this is a difference of opinion, not of practice. And if miracles be really wrought by it, I ſee no abſurdity in giving that name to it; and am ſure, that, among the Proteſtants, all thoſe, who draw their religious principles from the ſame ſource of *Primitive Antiquity*, muſt readily allow it to be *a Sacrament.* Then as to *the Sign of the Croſs*, it is affirmed likewiſe to have wrought many great miracles, in the fourth century; *to have driven away Devils every where before it; to have thrown open gates, which were ſhut againſt it; to have been imprinted miraculouſly on people's garments. And though the Archdeacon would perſuade us, that uſages of thoſe times were nothing, to the mimickry and fopperies of the later Popiſh rituals*; yet, on the contrary, it is reaſonable to believe, as well from the nature of the thing, as the teſtimonies of the Fathers themſelves, that with regard to this article of *the Croſs, the fopperies of the Romiſh Church* are much leſs extravagant, than thoſe of the primitive ages; when it's miracles were freſh, and it's devotion ran high; and when every Chriſtian, as *Tertullian* ſays, was poſſeſſed with ſuch ſuperſtitious notions about it, that he could not

take a ſingle ſtep, even in private and domeſtic life; *could not go out of his houſe, or come in; put on his cloaths, or his ſhoes; could not bathe, eat, light up a candle; go to bed, or ſit down; till he had firſt marked his forehead with the ſign of the Croſs* [1].

Thus we ſee at laſt, how every thing, which is aſſerted, in *the Introductory Diſcourſe*, on the ſubject of theſe Articles, is confirmed by the Archdeacon's own account of them. It is declared in that *Diſcourſe, that, in the third, fourth, and fifth centuries, all thoſe ſeveral corruptions, were either actually introduced, or the ſeeds of them ſo effectually ſown, that they could not fail of producing the fruits, which we now ſee in the Romiſh Church.* And nothing could more directly illuſtrate the truth of it, than what he himſelf has here offered in contraction to it. He tells us, that this or that article was unknown to the third century, yet allows it at the ſame time to have been common in the fourth; or, if unknown ſtill to the fourth, that it was practiſed in the fifth: or, if it had not reached its full maturity in any of thoſe ages, yet from the ſeeds of it then ſown, it became ripe and floriſhing within a ſhort time after. Which is the whole that Dr. *M——n* can be reaſonably underſtood to mean, when he charges the preſent corruptions of *Rome*, to the principles and practices of the Primitive Fathers.

[1] Introd. Diſc. 19, 20.

But

But in the article of *Reliques*, the Archdeacon has introduced a very remarkable teſtimony, which I omitted to take notice of in that place, becauſe it ſeemed to require a more particular conſideration: I mean the authority there alledged by him of *a late Great Prelate, Archbiſhop Wake, who did not ſcruple*, he ſays, *to declare, that as to the honors, due to the genuin reliques of the Martyrs or Apoſtles, no Proteſtant would ever refuſe whatever the primitive Churches paid to them* [1]. I did not think it ſtrange, that what an Archbiſhop had not ſcrupled to declare, an Archbiſhop's Chaplain ſhould not ſcruple to defend, yet could not help wiſhing, that they had both of them been more ſcrupulous in the preſent caſe: becauſe I take it to be evident, as well from the dictates of reaſon as of religion, that how *genuin ſoever the reliques of the Martyrs or Apoſtles* may be, or whatever honors may have been paid to them by the primitive Church, no honors at all can be due to them from any Chriſtian, out of any other principle, than of mere policy, or ſuperſtition: the truth of which I ſhall endeavour to illuſtrate, by ſketching out a brief account of the riſe and progreſs of *relique-worſhip* from the earlieſt ages of the Church.

Within a ſhort time after the death of Chriſt, *St. Stephen*, one of the moſt eminent of the firſt diſciples, became the *firſt Martyr* of the Chriſtian Church. He was condemned to die by the great Council of the Jews, *and ſtoned to death ac-*

[1] Jeſ. Cab. 29, 30.

cordingly; and after his execution, *was carried to his burial by devout men, who made great lamentation over him* [1]. This is the ſumm of what we read in the Goſpel, on the ſubject of his Martyrdon; in which *his blood is ſaid to have been ſhed*, yet no care taken, to preſerve the leaſt drop of it, or any fragment of his ſkull, or bones, or cloaths, which might probably have been broken or rent by the violence of ſuch a death. The piety of thoſe *devout men*, who carried him to his grave, reached no farther in thoſe days, than to the natural and neceſſary office of giving him a decent burial, and lamenting the cruel and undeſerved fate of ſo excellent a perſon, and zealous champion of the Chriſtian faith: Nor do we read any where, of an *anniverſary Feſtival* appointed after his death, and celebrated afterwards at his Tomb, by the Apoſtles, or their Succeſſors, *on the day of his Martyrdom.*

Thus the body of this great and firſt of the Chriſtian Martyrs reſted in its grave, undiſturbed, unknown, and unheard of, for about three hundred years; when it is ſaid to have been diſcovered, *by a revelation from heaven*, in the fourth century: an age, in which the devotion of the Church was principally turned towards *the reliques of its Martyrs.* The fame of this miraculous diſcovery was ſoon ſpread through the Chriſtian world by the Pilgrims, who viſited *Jeruſalem*; whence they brought away ſome lit-

[1] Acts viii. 2. xxii. 20.

tle

tle portions of *the reliques* of this Saint; for the reception of which, ſeveral *Chapels or Oratories* were built in different countries, which, according to the cuſtom of thoſe days, were called *the Memories* of thoſe particular Martyrs, whoſe reliques were depoſited in them. Some of this kind were built for *the reliques of St. Stephen* in *Africa*; where they are affirmed to have wrought daily miracles, of the moſt amazing and illuſtrious kind; ſeveral of which are particularly recorded and atteſted by *St. Auſtin*, from his own knowledge [1]: whoſe authority, with that of the other Fathers, who relate much the ſame ſtories, of *other reliques* and *other miracles* wrought by them in different countries, is the very pattern, as well as the ſupport of the preſent *relique-worſhip* in the Church of *Rome*. If therefore the authority of a late Archbiſhop, now enforced by our Archdeacon, ſhould induce us, to pay the *ſame honors to the bones of Martyrs, which were paid to them by the primitive Church*, it would plunge us at once into the very depths of Popery.

But it may be ſaid perhaps, that though the Archdeacon's argument neceſſarily includes *the fourth Century*, within the notion of the primitive Church, yet the Archbiſhop's declaration muſt not be underſtood, to have reached ſo far, but be reſtrained to the earlier ages onely, which ſucceded immediately to that of the Apoſtles.

[1] De Civ. Dei, l. xxii. c. 8, § 20, 11.

Let

Let us inquire then, how far this limitation will juſtify it, and what honors were paid, even by the earlieſt Churches, to the reliques of their Martyrs. We have already ſeen, how, in the days of the Apoſtles, there does not appear to have been the leaſt care or thought, about preſerving any *reliques of the firſt Martyr Stephen*; nor after the rites of burial, any honors paid to him, but what are paid of courſe, to every virtuous and excellent man, by a pious and affectionate remembrance of his name and ſufferings. Yet in the very next age, and within a few years after the death of *St. John*, the laſt of the Apoſtles, the devotion of the Church began to take a ſuperſtitious turn, in this very article: as we may collect from the antient narratives of the Martyrdoms of two, the moſt celebrated Diſciples of that Apoſtle, *Ignatius* and *Polycarp*, which were written at the time of their execution, and by perſons who attended it.

Ignatius, then Biſhop of *Antioch*, was expoſed to the wild beaſts, in the Amphitheatre at *Rome*; on which occaſion, it was his earneſt prayer to God, *that the beaſts might devour his body ſo intirely, that no remains of it ſhould be left, to give his friends the trouble of gathering them.* And he obtained his wiſh ſo far, as the narrative informs us, *that none but the greater and harder of his holy bones remained*; yet theſe were gathered up, and carried to *Antioch*, and there *wrapped up in linen*,

as an ineſtimable treaſure, left to the Church, by the grace, which was in the Martyr [1].

In the relation alſo of the Martyrdom of *Polycarp*, who was burnt alive, ſome years after, at *Smyrna*, it is ſaid: "that his friends gathered "up his bones, *more precious than the richeſt* "*jewels, and tried above gold*, and depoſited "them in a proper place, where they propoſed "to aſſemble themſelves together, as oft as the "Lord would give them opportunity, to cele- "brate *the birth-day of his Martyrdom* [2]."

Such were the beginnings of the honors, paid *to the reliques of the Martyrs*, ſoon after the days of the Apoſtles: which ſuperſtition continued gradually to increaſe, in proportion as the Church itſelf increaſed in ſtrength and numbers, till it reached its full heighth upon the converſion of the Roman Empire; when the whole Chriſtian world ſeemed to be running mad, as it were, with an enthuſiaſtic zeal for the reliques of Saints; urged on and inflamed by the authority and eloquence of all the principal Fathers of that age. Thus *Chryſoſtom*, haranguing on the praiſes of *St. Ignatius*, to the people of *Antioch*, with whom his reliques were depoſited; "God, ſays he, took him from you for a ſhort "time, but reſtored him with greater glory: "and as thoſe, who borrow money, pay it back "again with intereſt, ſo God, after he had bor-

[1] See Relation of the Martyrdom of St. Ignat. tranſlated into Engliſh by Archbiſhop Wake, § 12.

[2] See dit. of St. Polycarp, § 8.

"rowed

" rowed this pretious treaſure of you for a little " while, and ſhewn it to the City of *Rome*, ſent " it back again with the greater luſtre. You " ſent him out a Biſhop, but received him a " Martyr: You ſent him out with your prayers, " but received him with crowns. And not one- " ly you, but all the Cities on the road: for " how were they all affected, think you, to ſee " his reliques brought back? What pleaſure, " what exultation of joy did they expreſs? " What acclamations of praiſe did they ſend " forth from all ſides on the crowned Martyr[1]." And about the end of the fourth century, as *Euagrius* relates, " the Emperor *Theodoſius* was " moved by a ſuggeſtion from God, to do ſome " greater honors to this Martyr, by tranſlating " his bones with great pomp and ſolemn pro- " ceſſion, from the place, where they were firſt " depoſited, without the City, into a temple " within it, which was conſecrated on that oc- " caſion to the memory of *St. Ignatius:* whoſe " annual Feſtival was rendered ſtill more ſplen- " did and magnificent by *Gregory*, Biſhop of " that City [2]."

Here then we ſee, what was the practice of the primitive Church, with reſpect to *reliques*, from the earlieſt ages. And after this view of it, if we ſhould beg our Archdeacon, to inform us a little more preciſely, what part a Proteſtant ought to act in this caſe; whether with the firſt

[1] Oper. Tom. ii. p. 600. Edit. Benedict. [2] Lib. i. c. 16.

Chriſtians,

Chriſtians, in the days of the Apoſtles, he ought to obſerve *a perfect indifference or neutrality about them*, neither honoring nor inſulting them; or with the firſt Chriſtians, after the Apoſtles, *gather them with a religious care*; *wrap them up in ſilk, or fine linen, depoſit them in ſacred places, treat them as the moſt precious jewels, and ineſtimable treaſures of the Chriſtian Church*; he would ſtick, I dare ſay, to his text; exhort us to follow the example of the primitive Churches; and chearfully to perform, what the authority of thoſe pureſt ages had ſanctified: nor would he have any ſcruple, about puſhing our zeal too far; for he, who to the diſgrace of Proteſtantiſm, has ſtrenuouſly defended the groſſeſt ſuperſtitions, and moſt deſpicable impoſtures of the fifth century, cannot poſſibly be ſcandaliſed by the leſs obnoxious practices of the fourth.

I cannot conclude theſe remarks, without reminding the reader once more, that the reaſon of my appealing ſingly to *St. Jerom*, was, not to gain any particular advantage to my argument, by ſelecting a character the moſt liable to exception; but on the contrary, to ſhorten the diſpute, by offering one of the beſt and moſt valued characters of all the Antient Fathers, as a pattern or teſt, by which the merits of the reſt ſhall be determined. For if a perſon of his ſuperior parts and learning, diſtinguiſhed by the ſeverity of his life, as well as his piety, and zeal for the honor of the Goſpel, could either be impoſed upon himſelf by forged miracles, or knowingly

ingly impoſe them upon others, for the ſake of recommending thoſe ſuperſtitious rites, which are now practiſed by the Church of *Rome*, we need not look any farther; the ſame charge will eaſily be admitted, as it may more eaſily be proved againſt the reſt. For which reaſon, I ſhall here add one ſhort ſtory more, from our own hiſtory, which occurs now to my memory, and may ſerve as a freſh illuſtration, of what I have before affirmed, concerning the nature and effect of his writings and principles.

At the time of the Reformation, *Dr. John Storie*, an eminent Civilian, and bigotted Papiſt, who, in *Queen Mary's* reign, had been a chief inſtrument of *Bp. Bonner's* butcheries of the Proteſtants, fled into *Flanders* upon the acceſſion of *Q. Elizabeth*; where he was ſeized by ſtratagem, and brought a Priſoner into *England*, and executed afterwards at *Tybourn*, for the conſpiracies and invaſions of this kingdom, which he had been projecting and ſolliciting abroad: and being admoniſhed at the time of his execution, to declare ſomewhat concerning his religion, he choſe to ſay nothing more, than that he *died in the faith of St. Jerom.* This he took to be a ſufficient declaration of it; and for this, he has ever ſince been conſidered *as a Saint and Martyr* at *Rome*; where his martyrdom was printed, and repreſented in the Engliſh College of that City [1]. But if *Jerom* after all, as the Archdeacon tells us, be really *on the Proteſtant ſide*,

[1] See Strype's Annals of Queen Elizabeth, vol. i. p. 522.

and

and *a grievous thorn in the ſides of the Papiſts*, it is incumbent on him, to correct the miſtake of our Hiſtorians, as well as the inſolence of the Romaniſts, and to do juſtice to the memory of this celebrated Doctor, by reclaming him, as a Martyr of our own Church, and as true a Proteſtant as himſelf; having ſacrificed his life in the defence of that *pure and primitive Chriſtianity*, which he is now ſo zealouſly recommending.

But the Archdeacon, as we find, will not be provoked to give an anſwer to any facts, which relate to *St. Jerom:* all, which he has thought fit to ſay to them, amounts to little more than this; "that *Jerom* was a wonderful ſcholar and fine "writer, and though he had ſome blemiſhes and "peccancies, yet they were too trifling to want "any apology: and for his own part, that he "highly eſteems thoſe primitive teachers and "defenders of Chriſtianity, whoſe works he has "read with attention, in order to *judge fairly and* "*accurately* of Chriſtian antiquities, by the lights "which he received from them: and that a "modern ſcholar, who ſhould ſcorn to accept "their Aſſiſtance, would make but a *ſorry kind* "*of figure* in the republic of letters [1]."

How *fairly and accurately his attentive ſtudy of the Fathers* has taught him *to judge of Chriſtian antiquities*, the reader will eaſily perceive, from the concluſion, which he has drawn from it, to the great comfort of Proteſtants; that *all thoſe primitive Saints in general, and St. Jerom in parti-*

[1] See Def. p. 36, 40, 41, 42.

cular,

cular, are an armoury on our ſide, perpetually galling the Papiſts, in ſome tender point, and expoſing to every common eye the unſcriptural and unprimitive crudities of their principles and practices [1]. And how uſeful alſo the *ſame ſtudy* is, in qualifying a man, *to make a figure in the world*, is evident likewiſe, from the great fame and honors, which this ſame Archdeacon has raiſed to himſelf on that ſole foundation.

If this then be the caſe, and if ſuch advantages really flow from the ſtudy of thoſe Antients, the Papiſts have great reaſon to expoſtulate with him, for the injuſtice offered to their religion, by the very Title of his *Charge*; *Popery the bane of true letters.* For whatever we have to ſay againſt Popery, it is notorious, that it is more immediately connected with *the ſtudy of the Fathers*, and has done much more towards promoting it in the Chriſtian world, than Proteſtantiſm: and that one ſingle Order of Monks has publiſhed more beautiful, correct and uſeful editions of their works, than all the Proteſtant countries together have ever done: ſo that by his own principles, Popery, inſtead of being called the *bane*, ought to be called, the *baſis of true letters*; or the onely ſchool, whoſe ſcholars are rightly qualified, *to make a figure in the republic of letters.*

But this character of Popery, as it is ſignified by his Title, is not a contradiction onely to his own principles, but, what is ſtill worſe, ſeems

[1] See Charge, p. 2.

contrary likewiſe to truth, and the experience of thoſe, who have viſited Popiſh countries; in many of which, the liberal arts and ſciences are known to floriſh in an eminent degree; and their Cities to abound with noble and uſeful libraries, open and acceſſible to all, while the richeſt and largeſt of all Proteſtant Cities is ſhamefully deſtitute of them. When we write therefore againſt Popery, let us be ſo candid, as to give it its due; for when we have ſo much truth on our ſide, it is a ſhame to recur to lies: we may call *its doctrines, abſurd*; *its rites, paganiſh*; *its worſhip, idolatrous*; we may call it, *a ſyſtem of craft and policy*, contrived to enſlave the Chriſtian world to the dominion of *the Romiſh Church*: but when we aſcribe to it what is falſe, we expoſe ourſelves to the juſt contempt of the Romaniſts themſelves, and inſtead of diſcrediting their religion, give them a bad ſpecimen of our own.

A

VINDICATION

OF THE

FREE INQUIRY

INTO THE

MIRACULOUS POWERS,

Which are ſuppoſed

To have ſubſiſted in the CHRISTIAN CHURCH, &c.

From the OBJECTIONS of

Dr. DODWELL and Dr. CHURCH.

A

VINDICATION

OF THE

FREE INQUIRY, &c.

DR. *Dodwell* takes occaſion to acquaint us, in his Preface, *that his performance was not intended for the public view, but the peruſal onely of a private friend; till being communicated to ſeveral others, whoſe judgement he had great reaſon to value, it was committed to the preſs by the unanimous advice of them all.* Dr. *Church* alſo, after the example of his partner, could not deny himſelf the pleaſure of declaring; that *he likewiſe had the honor of receiving the approbation of ſome eminent, learned, and judicious perſons, who had taken the trouble of reviſing his papers, and adviſed him to offer them to the public.* This method of puffing their works *a priori*, ſo flattering to the generality of our writers, is a ſort of pride, which I cannot aſſume to myſelf; who have no man's judgement to truſt to, but my own; no *Clerical Synod* to call around me; no *Epiſcopal Oracle* to conſult. I am acquainted, indeed, with many of the Clergy, whom I highly eſteem; and whoſe advice might be

uſeful to me on ſeveral occaſions; if the ſubjects, which I have choſen to defend, did not forbid me to ſeek it: for their ſakes, I mean, not for my own; leſt the ſuſpicion of any communication with me, might hurt their fame or fortunes, and expoſe them to the ſame envy, which I myſelf have incurred. For heterodox opinions in the Church, like treaſonable words in the State, impart a guilt even to the hearer, and make him an accomplice in the crime, unleſs he purge himſelf by a diſcovery, and impeachment of the author.

But to return to our Doctors; it is certainly a mere impertinence, to talk of the approbation given to their books, before they had paſſed through the preſs, ſince their merit can onely be aſcertained by the ſucceſs of that paſſage, and the reception, which they may afterwards find, not from a cabal of private friends, but from the general voice, and judgement of men of ſenſe; unprejudiced, and unbiaſſed with regard to the point in diſpute. And here again, I muſt own, theſe Doctors have received an honor, which I can never hope to obtain, from the public teſtimonial of a great and famous Univerſity, to whoſe judgement I have ever been diſpoſed to pay the higheſt regard. On this indeed, they have great reaſon to plume themſelves; but would have had much greater, if that learned Body could ſtamp the truth of opinions by the ſame ſeal, with which it ſtamps diploma's, and confers honors on the Authors of them. For

in the preſent caſe, it has fallen out very unluckily both to thoſe, who conferred theſe honors, and to thoſe alſo, who now wear them; that even before the collation of them, one of the very books, on the account of which they were given, was effectually confuted, and, in every article relating to the main queſtion, ſhewn to be wholly trifling and impertinent; and incapable of adding the leaſt advantage to the cauſe which it defends, or of doing the leaſt hurt to that which it had undertaken to overthrow. And the confutation of either of the two Doctors may be applied very juſtly to them both: for in the more bulky volume of the Second, we find nothing more than ſome little enlargement of the ſame arguments and objections, the ſame cavils and evaſions, which we meet with in the Firſt.

Now theſe, I ſay, are ſubſtantially confuted by Mr. *Toll*; a Clergyman of *Hampſhire*, bred, I ſuppoſe, in the ſame Univerſity; and who would have been a credit to any, though not yet honored with any *Diploma*, nor likely to reap any other reward for his pains, than what an honeſt mind and honeſt fame will be ſure to give to his diſintereſted defence, of what he takes to be true, in an Inquiry of no ſmall importance to the Chriſtian Church.

I ſhould have been glad, therefore, for the ſake of the Univerſity, which will ever engage my good wiſhes, that the zeal, which it has expreſſed on this occaſion, for the primitive Fa-

thers, and their miracles, had been a little more patient, and not hurried it on, to crown its champions before the victory; and by giving its ſanction to opinions ſtill in diſpute, to make itſelf a party in a controverſy; which may poſſibly end, as many have done, to the mortification of thoſe, who have ventured to give judgement in it, before both ſides have been heard.

Theſe Doctors begin with an examination of my Preface; wherein I had laid down a few general principles, which might be of uſe, as I imagined, to prepare the reader to form a right judgement on the ſubject of the *Free Inquiry*. But here, they meet with many paſſages, which greatly offend and puzzle them; ſome as carrying a ſuſpicious meaning; others, a dangerous one; and others as wholly unintelligible, and having no meaning at all [1]. Yet theſe paſſages, as they own, have no relation to the queſtion in diſpute; and the ſole uſe which they make of them, is, to give them an invidious turn, and charge them with pernicious tendencies, in order to prepoſſeſs the reader with an odious opinion of my character and principles, and, by conſequence, a favorable one of the zeal and piety in expoſing them, and to warn all good Chriſtians of that poiſon, which I was covertly intending to infuſe. Yet the meaning of theſe very places will appear, I dare ſay, to every candid reader, to be both clear, and inoffenſive;

[1] Dod. 5, 13, 15. Ch. Pref. vii. 17.

cloathed

cloathed with no affected obſcurity, nor carrying any other ſenſe, than what I ſhall ever be ready to avow and openly defend.

For inſtance; I have ſaid, that this queſtion concerning the miraculous powers of the Church, depends on the joint credibility of the facts, pretended to have been produced by thoſe powers, and of the witneſſes, who atteſt them. Then, after ſome reaſons given, why the credibility of facts ought generally to have more weight with us, than the credibility of witneſſes, I conclude the paragraph in theſe words; "The "teſtimony therefore of facts, as it is offered to "our ſenſes, in this wonderful fabric and con- "ſtitution of worldly things, may properly be "called the teſtimony of God himſelf: as it "carries with it the ſureſt inſtruction in all caſes, "and to all nations, which in the ordinary "courſe of his providence, he has thought fit to "appoint for the guidance of human life [1]."

There is another paſſage or two of a ſimilar kind, and of equal offence to theſe doctors, in which, after cenſuring the raſhneſs of forming peremptory arguments, as my adverſaries are apt to do, upon the ſuppoſed neceſſity or propriety of a divine interpoſition, in this or that particular caſe, I add; "that the whole, which the wit "of man can poſſibly diſcover, either of the "ways or will of the Creator, muſt be acquired "by a contrary method; not by imagining "vainly within ourſelves, what may be proper

[1] Free Inq. Pref. p. 10.

"or

" or improper for him to do, but by looking " abroad, and contemplating what he has actu- " ally done, and attending ſeriouſly to that re- " velation, which he has made of himſelf from " the beginning, and placed continually before " our eyes, in the wonderfull works and beau- " tifull fabric of this viſible world [1]." Again, in conformity with this principle, I obſerve, " how fallacious the judgement even of " the wiſeſt men has been, and ever will be, " when, deſerting this path of nature and expe- " rience, and giving the reins to fancy and con- " jecture, they attempt to illuſtrate the ſecret " counſels of Providence [2]."

Theſe are the paſſages which chiefly offend them, they declare them to be crude, unguarded, alarming expreſſions, big with dangerous inſinuations, inconſiſtent with my own conceſſions, that they prove too much, and ſeem to aſſert the impoſſibility of all miracles; ſo as to have made one of my Anſwerers believe, and all the reſt of them ſuſpect me, to be a Deiſt, nay that it cannot be excuſed from open Deiſm, from which therefore I ought to purge myſelf [3]. Since I am called upon then ſo ſolemnly, to explane myſelf on the ſubject of theſe paſſages, I ſhall take this occaſion to open them a little more particularly, and declare my real view in them, tho' perſuaded at the ſame time,

[1] Free Inq. Pref. p. 22. Ch. p. 75. [2] Free Inq. Pref. p. 20. [3] Ch. vii. 17, 65.

that

that no explication of them can be wanted by any diſintereſted reader, as well as that none, which I ſhall give, will ever ſatisfy theſe Doctors, who now demand it.

One of them appears to be ſcandaliſed, by the title of *Revelation*, which I have given, to that diſcovery, which God made of himſelf in the viſible works of his creation. Yet it is no other, than what the wiſe in all ages have given to it: who conſider it as the moſt authentic and indiſputable revelation, which God has ever given of himſelf from the beginning of the world to this day. It was this, by which the firſt notice of him was revealed to the inhabitants of the earth; and by which alone it has been kept up ever ſince, among the ſeveral nations of it. From this the reaſon of man was inabled, to trace out his nature and attributes, and by a gradual deduction of conſequences to learn his own nature alſo, with all the duties belonging to it, which relate either to God, or his Fellow creatures. This conſtitution of things was ordained by God as an univerſal Law or rule of conduct to man; the ſource of all his knowledge; the teſt of all truth: by which all ſubſequent revelations, which are ſuppoſed to have been given by God in any other manner, muſt be tried and cannot be received as divine, any farther than as they are found to tally and coincide with this original ſtandard.

It was this divine law, which I referred to, in the paſſages above recited, being deſirous, to excite the reader's attention to it, as it would inable him to judge the more clearly and freely of the argument, which I was handling. For by contemplating this law, he would diſcover the genuin way, which God himſelf has marked out to us for the acquiſition of true knowledge, not from the authority, or the reports of our fellow creatures, but from the information of the facts, and material objects, which, in his providential diſtribution of worldly things, he hath preſented to the perpetual obſervation of our ſenſes. For as it was from theſe, that his exiſtence and nature, the moſt important articles of all knowledge, were firſt diſcovered to man, ſo, that grand diſcovery furniſhed new light towards tracing out the reſt, and made all the inferior ſubjects of human knowledge the more eaſily diſcoverable to us by the ſame method.

I had another view likewiſe in the ſame paſſages, and applicable to the ſame end, of giving the reader a more inlarged notion of the queſtion in diſpute, who, by turning his thoughts to reflect on the works of the Creator, as they are manifeſted to us in this fabric of the world, could not fail to obſerve, that they were all of them great, noble, and ſuitable to the majeſty of his nature; carrying with them the proofs of their origin, and ſhewing themſelves to be the productions of an allwiſe and allmighty

ty Being: and by accuſtoming his mind to theſe ſublime reflections, he will be prepared to determine, whether thoſe miraculous interpoſitions, ſo confidently affirmed to us by the Primitive Fathers, can reaſonably be thought to make a part in the grand ſcheme of the divine adminiſtration; or whether it be agreeable, that God, who created all things by his will, and can give what turn to them he pleaſes by the ſame will; ſhould, for the particular purpoſes of his Government and the ſervice of the Church, deſcend to the low expedient of viſions, and revelations; granted ſometimes to boys, for the inſtruction of the Elders, and ſometimes to women, to ſettle the faſhion and length of their veils, and ſometimes alſo to the Paſtors of the Church, to injoin them to ordain one man a lecturer, another a Prieſt; or that he ſhould ſcatter a profuſion of miracles around the ſtake of a Martyr; yet all of them vain and inſignificant, and without the leaſt ſenſible effect, either of preſerving the life, or eaſing the ſufferings of the Saint; or even of mortifying his perſecutors, who were always left to enjoy the full triumph of their cruelty, and the poor Martyr to expire by a miſerable death. When theſe facts, I ſay, are brought to the original teſt, and compared with the genuin and indiſputable works of the Creator; how minute, how trifling, how contemptible muſt they appear? and how incredible muſt it be thought, that, for the inſtruction of his Church, God

ſhould

ſhould employ miniſters ſo precarious, unſatisfactory, and inadequate; *as the extaſies of women and boys, and the viſions of intereſted Prieſts*; which were derided at the very time by men of ſenſe, to whom they were propoſed.

That this univerſal law was actually reveled to the Heathen world, long before the Goſpel was known to it, we learn from all the principal ſages of antiquity, who made it the capital ſubject of their ſtudies and writings. *Cicero* has given us a ſhort abſtract of it, in a fragment ſtill remaining from one of his books on Government, which I ſhall here tranſcribe in his own words, as they will illuſtrate my ſenſe alſo, in the exceptionable paſſages abovementioned, which appears ſo dark and ſo dangerous to my Antagoniſts.

"The true law, ſays he, is right reaſon, "conformable to the nature of things; con- "ſtant, eternal, diffuſed through all; which "calls us to duty, by commanding, deterrs us "from ſin, by forbidding; which never loſes "it's influence with the good; nor ever pre- "ſerves it with the wicked. This law cannot "poſſibly be over-ruled by any other; nor ab- "rogated in the whole or in part: nor can we "be abſolved from it, either by the Senate, or "the people: nor are we to ſeek any other "comment, or interpreter of it, but itſelf: nor "can there be one law at *Rome*, another at "*Athens*; one now, another hereafter; but the "ſame eternal, immutable law comprehends all "nations,

" nations, at all times, under one common " Maſter and Governor of all, God. He is " the inventor, propoundor, enactor of this " law: and whoſoever will not obey it, muſt " firſt renounce himſelf and throw off the na- " ture of man: by doing which, he will ſuffer " the greateſt puniſhment, tho' he ſhould eſ- " cape all the other torments, which are com- " monly believed to be prepared for the wicked."

Our Doctors, perhaps, will look with horror on all this, as rank Deiſm; but let them call it what they pleaſe, I ſhall ever avow and defend it, as the fundamental, eſſential and vital part of all true religion, and what the Goſpel itſelf muſt adopt, as it's beſt foundation and ſupport. The fragment was preſerved to us by *Lactantius*, who lived in the third Century, and was the beſt Chriſtian writer of his age; who, after the recital of it in his works, makes this reflection upon it; " what man, tho' already acquainted " with the myſteries of God, could ſet forth the " law of God with ſuch force as this? who yet " was far removed from the knowledge of the " truth. For my part, I look upon thoſe, " who utter ſuch truths without knowing them, " as perſons inſpired by a divine Spirit. But " as he clearly ſaw the force and the ground of " the holy law, ſo, if he had known or could " have explaned it's precepts alſo, he would " then have performed the part, not of a Philo- " ſopher, but of a Prophet [1]." Here we ſee

[1] D. Juſ. vi. viii.

" a Chriſt-

a Chriſtian writer, who lived in the third Century, frankly acknowledging this law, as it is explaned by *Cicero, to be the law of God*; and which our knowledge, even of the myſteries of God, as propounded to us by the Goſpel, could not inable us to illuſtrate with ſuch force, as the improved reaſon of this great and virtuous man: which correſponds alſo with what *Cicero* has elſewhere declared of the ſame *law, that it was the mind of God, governing all things by eternal reaſon; whoſe ſubſtitute or interpreter on earth was the reaſon and mind of the wiſe* [1].

This is all the explication which I can give, towards healing the ſcruples of thoſe, who are offended with the paſſages above mentioned, how far it may ſatisfy our Doctors, I neither know nor care: for tho' it will ever be my deſire to give all ſatisfaction to every candid and liberal inquirer, yet in the preſent controverſy, theſe Anſwerers have ſhewn, that they came with no view of inquiring freely and philoſophically, what was true, but to defend with all their ſkill, what their prepoſſeſſions and ambitious views made them reſolve to ſupport at any rate, in defiance of all the light and conviction which could poſſibly be offered on the contrary ſide. This will clearly appear to all men of ſenſe and candor from the general turn and ſpirit of their performances, and from their futile, evaſive and illiberal manner of treating the moſt important arguments of the *Free Inquiry*; which

[1] Leg. ii. 4.

I ſhall now therefore procede to examine; without troubling the reader with any more of their prefatory objections, which are all chiefly of the ſame kind; not relating to the main quæſtion, but cavilling onely on ſome incidental points, of little or no moment to it, in order to draw ſomething out of them, that, by tainting the credit of the Author with the weaker part of their readers, may infuſe a general diſtruſt of his argument.

Let us enter then into the *Free Inquiry*; where the firſt argument, which I made uſe of towards confirming my general poſition, is the ſilence of the Apoſtolic Fathers, with regard to any ſtanding power of working miracles, as reſiding ſtill in that age, for the converſion of the Heathen world. This ſilence is frankly allowed by the firſt of my Antagoniſts, Mr. *Jackſon*, who inſiſts however, and endeavours to ſhew, that the inference, which I draw from it, is vain and groundleſs. Theſe Doctors however, more ſtout than their Leader, and reſolving to diſpute every inch of ground with me, utterly deny the fact of their ſilence, and affirm; that tho' they do not indeed inlarge on their miraculous powers, nor make any direct appeal to them, as their ſucceſſors do; yet that many occaſional hints and plain references to them are to be found in their writings.

The principal inſtance, which they produce in proof of this aſſertion, is from the Epiſtle of St. *Clemens to the Corinthians*; which, as it is

paraphraſed by *Archbiſhop Wake*, does expreſsly aſſert the ſubſiſtence of miraculous powers to that particular age. And upon the authority of this paraphraſe, of which I had not taken any notice, they preſently reproach me with the willfull ſuppreſſion of a teſtimony, which directly overthrows my argument, and to which I had not attempted to give any anſwer [1]. And here indeed I muſt confeſs, that the paſſage, as explaned by the Archbiſhop, is full to their purpoſe, and contrary to my own; yet, knowing it to be ſuch, that I willfully omitted it. But I can plead at the ſame time, with great truth, that the reaſons, which moved me to omit it, were, firſt, the utter inſignificancy, which it appeared to have, as to any proof or evidence, relating to this quæſtion; and ſecondly, a regard alſo for the character of that venerable Prelate, which made me unwilling to recall into public light a paraphraſe, which I took to be unworthy of him, and of all others, that I had ever obſerved, to be the moſt palpably forced and dreſſed up, without any ground or color from the text, to ſerve the point, which he was inculcating, concerning the continuance of the miraculous powers to the times of theſe Apoſtolic Fathers.

The Words of the Text, as they ſtand in the Epiſtle clear of the paraphraſe, and tranſlated by the Archbiſhop himſelf, are theſe, "Let a "man be faithfull; let him be powerfull in the

[1] D. 27, 28. Ch. 94, 5.

"utter-

"utterance of knowledge; let him be wiſe in "making an exact judgement of words; let "him be pure in all his actions: but ſtill, by "how much the more he ſeems to be above "others, by reaſon of theſe things, by ſo much "the more will it behove him to be humble-"minded, and to ſeek what is profitable to all "men, not his own advantage [1]."

Thus ſtands the paſſage in the Archbiſhop's Engliſh Edition of the Epiſtles of theſe Apoſtolic Fathers; where no man, whoſe mind was not prepoſſeſſed with the ſame hypotheſis, or ſenſes dazzled with the authority [2] of the Archbiſhop, could find a ſyllable, which bears any ſort of reference to miraculous powers, or ſuggeſts the leaſt hint of the continuance of them to that age [3]. How is it then, that the Archbiſhop has contrived to give ſuch a turn to it? Why, not by any critical art, or grammatical rule, but by forcibly thruſting his own ſenſe into it; in a manner ſo groſs and arbitrary, as would fix the ſame ſenſe, or any other, upon any paſſage whatſoever. We ſee, that the words of the text, unparaphraſed, are clear of any miraculous ſenſe; for in his Preliminary Diſcourſe to theſe very Epiſtles he has ſhewn us, how eaſily this may be performed on any proper occaſion, by the help of a commodious paraphraſe.

[1] Wake's Ep. S. 48. [2] Ch. 104. [3] T. 19.

The paſſage then, when opened and illuſtrated by the Archbiſhop's explanatory tranſlation, ſtands thus;

"Let a man have faith; that is, *ſays the* "*Archbiſhop*, ſuch a faith, by which he is able "to work miracles: let him be powerfull to "utter knowledge; that is, myſtical know- "ledge, *ſays the Archbiſhop*, for to that the ex- "preſſion manifeſtly relates: let him be wiſe "in diſcerning of ſpeeches; for that was ano- "ther gift, *ſays the Archbiſhop*, common to thoſe "times: let him be pure in his actions: but "ſtill, by how much the more he ſeems to ex- "cell others, that is, *ſays the Archbiſhop*, upon "the account of theſe extraordinary endow- "ments; by ſo much the more will it behove "him to be humble-minded [1]."

The recital of this paraphraſe will readily convince every man of ſenſe, that I could have no other reaſon for omitting it, than what I have already alledged; nor could I ever imagine, that, in a controverſy of this kind, which can be determined onely by the authentic facts and teſtimonies of antiquity, any one, who profeſſed to be ſearching into the real ground of it, would attempt to prove by a paraphraſe, what he could not prove from the text, and inſtead of the poſitive teſtimony of an Apoſtolic Father, which his cauſe neceſſarily required, take up with the arbitrary comment of a modern Prelate. Such are the ſhifts, to which theſe

[1] Wake's Prel. Dif. p. 113.

pretended champions of truth are driven in their defence of the primitive miracles! on which I ſhall make no farther remark, but refer my reader to Mr. *Toll*, who has very effectually and particularly expoſed the impertinence of all the little arts and ſophiſtry, with which they labour to extort miraculous ſenſes out of the dark hints and equivocal paſſages of theſe Apoſtolic Fathers.

Dr. *Dodwell* procedes, in the next place, to defend the particular proofs, which his Father had formerly alledged from theſe ſame Fathers, to evince the continuance of the miraculous powers to their days. Theſe proofs, he ſays, *are recited by me with contempt:* yet I am conſcious, that in reciting them I never had any ſuch intention; and cannot ſee how my words can fairly be interpreted to imply any. Nor has it ever been my cuſtom, to ſhew a contempt of any man, who had not juſtly deſerved it of me by ſome unprovoked and contemptible attack upon myſelf. In the preſent caſe, however, I cannot but applaud the piety of a ſon, in expreſſing ſo jealous a concern for the reputation, and ſuch a zeal to defend the opinions, of a learned and virtuous Parent.

The firſt of theſe proofs is taken from the title or addreſs of *Ignatius's* Epiſtle to the Church of *Smyrna*; upon which I have already ſaid what I thought ſufficient for my purpoſe in the *Free Inquiry:* and the objections, which Dr. *Dodwell* has ſince made to it, are ſhewn to be

wholly inſignificant by Mr. *Toll* [1]. But as his defence of his Father's interpretation wholly turns upon the ſenſe of the word, *chariſma*; which he affirms to be a term *peculiarly appropriated to denote extraordinary gifts*; and as he makes much uſe of the ſame obſervation, towards confirming ſome other objections, in different parts of his work; ſo I ſhall add a word or two on this occaſion, to ſhew this favorite criticiſm to be vain and groundleſs, and the imaginary conceit of ſome minute Critic, who happened to want it, as this Doctor here does, for the ſupport of a particular hypotheſis. For the word *chariſma*, as well in it's native and proper ſenſe, as in the uſe, which has ever been made of it both by the ſacred, and the Primitive writers, ſignifies nothing more than a gift, whether it be natural or ſupernatural; ordinary or extraordinary: wherefore, in order to obviate the application of ſo ſilly an obſervation in our preſent controverſy, I had ſhewn how one of theſe Apoſtolic writers, St. *Clemens*, had applied the word, *chariſmata*, or gifts of God, to denote the different talents and abilities, natural and acquired, by which the characters of men are uſually diſtinguiſhed; as *ſtrength*, *riches*, *wiſdom*, *humility*, *continence* [2]. But Dr. *Dodwell* declares, that *he ſees no ſuch thing*; and that the very gifts, or *chariſmata*, here recited, *may ſtrictly be interpreted of ſupernatural endowments* [3]. What can we ſay to ſuch

[1] Toll's Def. p. 23.
[2] Free Inq. p. 7.
[3] Dod. p. 30.

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perverſeneſs as this? or of what uſe can it be to reaſon with ſo incorrigible a bigotry, which can reject the clear teſtimony of our ſenſes, rather than give up a groundleſs hypotheſis?

But my notion of the word, *chariſma*, may be confirmed alſo, as I have ſaid, by many teſtimonies from the ſacred writers, as denoting ſimply *a gift of God*, of what kind ſoever it may be: of which it will be ſufficient to give an inſtance or two. The gift of God, or *chariſma*, ſays St. *Paul*, is eternal life [1]: and in other places, where he is ſpeaking of the gifts of God, we find him uſing the words, *chariſma* or *dorema*, indifferently, as terms ſynonymous, and denoting the ſame thing [2]. And we ſometimes ſee the ſame word applied to the gift of worldly riches, or an ability to miniſter to the neceſſities of the poor.

On the whole then, as the ſole defence, which the Doctor makes of the proof of thoſe numerous miracles, which his Father had drawn out of this paſſage, is grounded on a miſtaken ſenſe of the word *chariſma* [3]; ſo the Father's proof, and the ſon's defence, muſt of courſe fall to the ground. And after all the pains, which they been taking, to puzzle and confound the obvious ſenſe of the text, it will appear at laſt to be nothing more than this; that the *Church of* Smyrna, *being bleſſed with faith and charity*, which *Ignatius* extolls in this very Epiſtle, as the moſt excellent of all gifts, and what the

[1] Rom. vi. 23. [2] Ibid. 15, 16. [3] Ch. p. 98.

Apoſtles themſelves prefer to the whole liſt of them, was deficient in nothing, which could be required to the accompliſhment and perfection of the Chriſtian Character.

The Doctor leads us on to another of his Father's proofs, on which he obſerves, that as I am apt to call for facts, ſo his Father has here preſented me one beforehand [1]. But the fact, here referred to, is not of ſuch a ſort, as I ſhall ever be diſpoſed to call for: nor do I find myſelf to be preſented, in this inſtance, with any thing more, than what had been offered to me in the laſt; an unnatural and extravagant interpretation of an obſcure paſſage, whence his Father had inferred the exiſtence of a chimerical fact, of which there is not the leaſt example or intimation in all hiſtory. But ſince the Doctor ſtrenuouſly defends the truth of his Father's interpretation; aſſerts the words to be incapable of any other ſenſe, and profeſſes a particular contempt of mine; it will be neceſſary to recurr to the paſſage itſelf, that by reviewing and comparing the two oppoſite expoſitions, we may ſettle at laſt it's real and unquæſtionable meaning.

St. *Ignatius*, in his Epiſtle to the *Romans*, written on his journey towards that City, where he was going to be expoſed to the wild beaſts in the Amphitheater, earneſtly begs of them, *that they would not ſhew an unſeaſonable good will to him, by hindering his martyrdom, but would ſuffer him to be food for the beaſts* [2]. The quæſ-

[1] Dod p. 31. [2] Wake's Ep. of Ign. § iv.

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tion now is; what were the means, which he referred to on this occaſion, and which the brethren might apply to the hindrance of his martyrdom? Mr. *Dodwell* the Father, affirms them to be prayers: which had a power, he ſays, of diſabling the beaſts from aſſaulting the Martyr, when expoſed to them in the Amphitheaters. But if that had been the meaning of *Ignatius's* requeſt, it would imply, that the efficacy of ſuch prayers had been tried in other caſes of martyrdom, prior to that of *Ignatius:* yet no ſuch fact is to be found in all hiſtory, nor any mention made of it by the Apoſtles or Apoſtolic writers, except by a ſingle intimation in this very Epiſtle, where *Ignatius* ſays, that he would *encourage the wild beaſts, that they might be ſure to devour him, and not ſerve him, as they had done ſome, whom out of fear they had not touched* [1].

But the whole tenor of the Epiſtle ſeems utterly to confute this *Dodwellian* hypotheſis; in which the Martyr acquaints *the Romans*, that he had written to the other Churches, and ſignified to them all, that he was willing to die for God, unleſs they, the *Romans*, ſhould hinder him [2]. Now if this hindrance was to be effected by their prayers, ſurely the prayers of every other Church muſt have been as effectual, and as much to be apprehended by *Ignatius*, as thoſe of the *Romans:* yet, tho' in this journey from *Aſia*, he wrote to the *Epheſians*; to the *Magneſians*; to the *Trallians*; to the *Philadelphians*;

[1] Wake's Ep. of Ign. § v. [2] Ibid. § iv.

and

and to the *Smyrnæans*, as well as to the *Romans*; yet it was from the *Romans* alone, that he feared any obſtruction to his martyrdom, and whom he entreats to forbear it: to the reſt he ſignifies no fear of hindrance from them, nor any requeſt, that they would not attempt to give him any: which clearly ſhews, that the hindrance, which he ſo much dreaded, was not to ariſe from prayers, but ſome other means, which were peculiarly practicable to the Chriſtians of *Rome*, and of no other Church whatſoever.

I have already explaned my ſenſe of the paſſage in quæſtion, in the *Free Inquiry*, and ſhewn, that the requeſt of the Martyr related to the interceſſion and intereſt, which the Chriſtian brethren of *Rome* propoſed to make among their friends and fellow-citizens to preſerve him from his cruel fate. And this I have confirmed by the expreſs teſtimony of the original narrative of this martyrdom, written by perſons, who were preſent at it, and who for that purpoſe had accompanied the Martyr from *Aſia*. I have added the authority alſo of Dr. *Cave*, a writer in the higheſt eſteem with theſe admirers of the primitive Fathers, who in the Life, which he has written of this Saint, gives the ſame interpretation to the caſe now before us. Yet all this is of no weight with Dr. *Dodwell*, who contemns the notion of any intereſt or interceſſion, that could be made for the life of the Martyr, as extravagant and impoſſible, and what will not bear

bear an examination [1], and goes on to obſerve with great gravity, that *Ignatius* was ſentenced by the Emperor himſelf, who was now abſent from *Rome*, and had left no authority there which could mitigate the puniſhment: that no intereſt whatſoever could avail againſt an Imperial decree, nor all the power of the Court of *Rome* prevent the Saint from being thrown to the wild beaſts, when *Trajan* had commanded it: ſo that the onely poſſible method of ſaving him, which remained, was a miraculous interpoſition in his favor to be obtained by the efficacy of prayer. This is the ſum of his reaſoning, by which he confirms his Father's interpretation: and this the examination, which my account of the matter will not bear: yet it is all trifling and declamatory, grounded on looſe conjecture, and an imperfect knowledge of the hiſtory of thoſe times, as I ſhall preſently ſhew, by opening a little more explicitely the real nature and circumſtances of the caſe.

Theſe perſecutions of the Church, as the writers obſerve, were frequently brought on and forced as it were upon the Government, by the rage and clamors of the populace, whoſe hatred to the Chriſtians was ever exerting itſelf by ſeizing and dragging them to the tribunals of the Magiſtrates, and calling loudly for vengeance and puniſhment upon them: and when this ſpirit was once raiſed it was not eaſily appeaſed till it had drawn on a general perſecution. This

[1] Dod. p. 33.

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we may ſuppoſe to have been the caſe under *Trajan* and his ſucceſſors the *Antonines*, the moſt virtuous and juſt of all the *Roman* Emperors, yet all of them ſucceſſively perſecutors of the Church. It was the ſame ſort of indulgence to the humour of the populace, which obliged all the Emperors on ſome of the greater Feſtivals to entertain them with public ſhews and ſports in the Circus and Amphitheater, the chief of which were the combats of Gladiators and of wild beaſts, and the production of notorious criminals to be thrown to thoſe beaſts. This at preſent was the unhappy lot of the Chriſtians, whom the mob were often demanding to be produced on theſe occaſions for their ſport: and for this *Ignatius*, as the leader of the Chriſtians in *Aſia*, was now ſent to *Rome*, to be expoſed to the beaſts in the Amphitheater, for *the delight of the* Roman *people*, as the Emperor *Trajan*, who condemned him, is ſaid to have expreſſed it [1]. For one of thoſe Feſtivals was now approaching, for the celebration of which the diverſions above mentioned were always provided, and ſupplied from all the provinces of the Empire.

When *Ignatius* approached towards *Rome*, guarded all the way by ſoldiers, the Chriſtians, who came out to meet him, offered to employ all their intereſts and endeavours to prevent his execution, by moving the people, when aſſembled in the Amphitheater, to join with them in a common cry and demand to have his life ſpared.

[1] vi.

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This was agreeable to the cuſtom of *Rome* in theſe very ſhews; where in the combats of the Gladiators, though the conquered party was doomed of courſe to die, yet if he had behaved ſo, as to excite the compaſſion of the people, and raiſe a general clamor in favor of his life, it was always granted to the demand of the aſſembly: and as the chief end of all theſe ſhews was to keep the multitude in good humour, ſo the caſe was the ſame with regard to perſons condemned to be thrown to the beaſts: where if the mob had taken a fancy to reſerve the life of any one in the ſame manner, they would certainly have been gratified in it.

This was the experiment, which the Chriſtian brethren propoſed to try in favor of *Ignatius*; nor was the propoſal improbable: their number was now conſiderable in *Rome*, and many of their friends and acquaintance might have been prevailed with to aſſiſt in ſo compaſſionate an attempt: ſo that when an infirm old man came to be produced in the Amphitheater, incapable of giving them any diverſion, by any ſort of reſiſtance to the beaſts, the Chriſtians hoped, that the united voice of their whole party, ſtrengthened by the help of particular friends, as well as of many others, whom compaſſion would naturally join to them on ſuch an occaſion, would be of force enough to procure the life of the ſaint, from the preſiding Magiſtrate: who from the nature of his office was intruſted always of courſe

courſe with a diſcretionary power of gratifying the people in any demand of that ſort.

I ſhall now leave our Doctor to the quiet poſſeſſion of his *Father's proofs*, as he calls them, which he may hang up in his parloir with the eſcutcheons of his arms, as a record of perpetual honor to his family, by inabling them to boaſt of an anceſtor, who, by his ſingular ſkill and ſagacity, had recovered to the Chriſtian Church, after a ſucceſſion of ſeven centuries, an illuſtrious miracle, wholly unknown and unobſerved by all the primitive Fathers. Nor can I omit on this occaſion to take notice of the management of Dr. *Church*, with reſpect to theſe *Dodwellian proofs*, for ſince they came from his partner's Father, he thought it improper for him to meddle with them, and contented himſelf with the ſatisfaction of ſeeing them *defended at large*, as he ſays, *by the learned, judicious, and ingenious ſon* [1]. In which he gives us a little ſpecimen of the arts and craft of theſe Anſwerers: for though by dropping the defence of thoſe proofs he betrays a conſciouſneſs of their weakneſs, yet he excuſes that ſtep with ſuch complements to the Defender of them, as may perſuade a common reader, that he takes them to be really ſtrong and completely defended, which yet he dares not venture to affirm.

There is another article, or two, relating to the miraculous gifts of this age, which it will be proper to clear up, before I take leave of theſe

[1] Ch. p. 97.

Apoſtolic

Apoſtolic Fathers. I have obſerved in the *Free Inquiry*, for the prevention of all unneceſſary cavils, that, if from any paſſages which may be found in theſe Fathers, it ſhould appear probable to any; that they were favored, on ſome occaſions, with extraordinary illuminations, viſions, or divine impreſſions, I ſhall not diſpute that point with them, but remind them onely, that the gifts of that ſort were merely perſonal, and did not in any manner relate to the quæſtion before us [1]. But in this, my adverſaries inſiſt that I have overthrown my whole argument. "Are not theſe, ſays Dr. *Church*, the inſtances "of miraculous powers? and, if there were any "ſuch after the days of the Apoſtles, does not "the new ſcheme fall to the ground [2]?" Yes; I own them to be of a miraculous kind, if, as Dr. *Dodwell* ſays, *they be real* [3]. Who, by that expreſſion, ſeems to entertain ſome doubt about them himſelf: but whether they be real or not, it is certain, that they are nothing to the purpoſe of our preſent controverſy; as not being the effect of any ſtanding power granted to the Church, for the Converſion of the Heathens. All that I have allowed or ſuppoſed in this caſe is, that there may be a paſſage or two in theſe Apoſtolic writers, of a dubious ſignification, which weak and pious minds, perſuaded of the frequency of divine impulſes and illuminations, indulged to private Chriſtians in all ages of the

[1] Free Inq. p. x. [2] Ch. p. 107. [3] Dod. p. 42.

Church,

Church, may imagine to denote ſomething of that extraordinary kind. Yet, if they ſhould be ſtrictly interpreted to that ſenſe, the very matter of them would render the notion contemptible to all men of judgement. In one of theſe paſſages, St. *Ignatius* intimates, that he had been inſtructed by the Holy Spirit, concerning *the diviſions of the Church of* Philadelphia [1]. And in another, St. *Polycarp*, by means of a viſion, is ſaid to have foretold his own death, and the manner of it, three days before it happened [2].

[1] He is my witneſs, for whoſe ſake I am in bonds, that I knew nothing from any man. But the Spirit ſpake, ſaying on this wiſe; *Do nothing without your Biſhop.* Epiſt. to the Philad. § vii.

[2] *Socrates* alſo, as *Plato* relates, had a viſion, while he lay in the public priſon under ſentence of death: in which a beautifull woman appeared to him, and, calling him by his name, recited this verſe of *Homer*.

Ἡμάλί κεν τριτάτῳ Φθίην ἐρίβωλον ἱκοίμην. Il. ix. ϒ 363.

Upon this, he declared preſently to his friend *Crito*, that he was certainly to die on the third day: which fell out accordingly. His viſion, therefore, was as prophetical as *Polycarp's*, and equally confirmed by the event: yet they both probably flowed from the common ſource of all ſuch dreams or viſions; the ſtrong impreſſion, which the ſenſe of their uneaſy and uncertain condition, perpetually occurring to their waking thoughts, would naturally leave upon the fancy even in ſleep. Some Critics of great name ſeem to have been puzzled to diſcover, how *Socrates* could collect from this verſe, that he was to die on the third day; and have imagined it to be intimated to him by the word *Phthia*, as being derived from the verb φθίνω or φθίω, which carries in it the ſenſe of periſhing and diſſolution. But it was the natural and litteral ſenſe of the verſe, as it was ſpoken by *Achilles*,

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To which I can apply nothing better than what Mr. *Toll* has already ſaid in anſwer to Dr. *Dodwell* on this very point; where after a brief review of the nature, the ſubject, and the evidence of theſe predictons, he adds; *to cut off therefore at once all reaſonings and inferences about them, let it be underſtood, that we diſpute the facts* [1].

But on this article of viſions, I am charged

that gave him the hint; in which *Achilles*, on account of the affront which he had received in the *Grecian* camp, declares himſelf reſolved to quit it and return to *Phthia*, his native home, where a voyage of three days would land him in eaſe and peace. This *Socrates* took to himſelf as an admonition, that he likewiſe ſhould be *at his home*, in the ſame time; for his philoſophy never conſidered this earth as his home, but promiſed him another world, where the ſouls of the juſt after death were to enjoy a perpetual ſtate of peace and feſicity.

Again; it is ſaid of *Polycarp*, that he was a prophetic teacher, and that every word that went out of his mouth, either had been fulfilled or would be fulfilled. [See *Martyr.* § xvi.] The ſame is ſaid of *Cicero*, by *Corn. Nepos*, who perſonally knew him, and long ſurvived him. *Such was* Cicero's *prudence*, ſays he, *that one would imagine it to be a kind of divination: for he foretold not onely thoſe things, which happened, while he himſelf lived, but gave warning, as a Prophet, of the things, which we now ſee in common practice.* [Vit. Attic. 6.] Now *Cicero's* predictions are aſcribed onely to his prudence, *Polycarp's* to inſpiration. But where's the difference? *Polycarp* foretold his own death, or ſome calamity perhaps, which was likely to happen to the Church. *Cicero* foretold the important events and revolutions, which happened after his death to the greateſt Empire in the world: for the defence of whoſe liberty he ſacrificed his life.

[1] Toll's Def. p. 38.

by my adverſaries with a groſs inconſiſtency: for after I have declared the pretended viſions of theſe Apoſtolic writers to have no relation to my argument, yet, in the progreſs of my work, I have taken much pains in combating the credit of ſuch viſions, as having a cloſe connection with it. *How are theſe things reconcileable?* ſays Dr. Church. *Viſions and revelations are one of the five kinds of miracles, which he examines. If ſuch viſions,* &c. *do not at all relate to the preſent quæſtion, then all that part of the Inquiry, where theſe are conſidered, no leſs than ſixteen pages, are nothing to his purpoſe* [1]. Yet theſe things are all conſiſtent, and reconcileable at once to every one, who does not, either wilfully or inadvertently, overlook the true ſtate of the fact.

It is allowed on all ſides, that the Apoſtolic Fathers make no mention of any ſtanding miraculous powers, as indulged to the Church in their days: and that the viſions, which are aſcribed to them, are collected onely from an incidental hint or two, of an obſcure and precarious meaning: and as ſuch viſions alſo were onely of a private and a perſonal kind, without any uſe or effect towards the converſion of the Heathen world; ſo it is evident, that they could not in any ſort belong to the quæſtion in diſpute. But in the following ages, when an appeal was expreſly, conſtantly, and openly made by all the Fathers, to a perpetual power of working miracles, as actually ſubſiſting among them; and to

[1] Ch. p. 108.

which

which the Heathens themſelves were invited to come, and be eye-witneſſes: and when in the catalogue of theſe miracles, *viſions* and *prophecy* are particularly enumerated, as common in the Church; and granted to women, and boys, and all ſorts of Chriſtians whatſoever; then viſions became the proper ſubject of my work, and required an examination of them, as well as any other gifts, which are clamed by the ſame Fathers. This is the genuin ſtate of the caſe, which clearly ſhews, that the inconſiſtency with which it is charged, flows wholly from the blunders and inattention of thoſe, who charge it.

But there is another argument ſtill for the miraculous powers of this age, which our doctors have kept in reſerve, as their forlorn hope, in order to rally, and renew the fight, with it, if their firſt attack ſhould prove unſucceſsful. They were aware, that all the poſitive evidence of miracles, which could be drawn from the Apoſtolic Fathers, would be found too weak at laſt, to make any impreſſion in favor of their opinion: ſo that after all the pains, which they have been taking to puſh that ſort of proof as far as it would go, they now change hands; take up the contrary ſide of the quæſtion, and attempt to confute me by that very ſilence of theſe Fathers, with which I had been preſſing them. *Cicero* in one of his youthful orations, ſpeaking of certain witneſſes, whom he had been examining, ſays; *tacendo clamant*; he condemns the expreſſion afterwards, as too puerile; but

the application of it made here by our Doctors is certainly much more ſo. No proof of an affirmative kind, can reaſonably be drawn from mere ſilence; whatever force it has with regard to facts of hiſtory, is chiefly negative, oftner detracting from their credit, than adding any ſtrength to them in the preſent caſe; therefore when we reflect, that immediately before the times of theſe Apoſtolic Fathers, miracles are allowed to have ſubſiſted in great abundance; yet that the ſaid miracles have long ſince been withdrawn, at ſome time or other which remains ſtill unknown, and unſettled, we cannot be at a loſs to determine, whether the ſilence of half a century, which immediately ſucceded to that age of miracles, ſhould incline us rather to believe, that they were continued ſtill to the Church, through that ſilent period, or that they were actually withdrawn at that very time and no other.

Dr. *Dodwell*, on the other hand, reaſons thus; "If their ſilence were as total and uniform, as "Doctor *M.* contends, it might be urged "ſtrongly on our ſide of the quæſtion. For it "is ſcarce credible, that they ſhould no where "take any notice of ſo great and ſudden an al"teration, as muſt have happened, if the princi"pal leaders of the Chriſtian cauſe, and Go"vernors of the Church had all at once been "deprived, in thoſe times of adverſity, of the "privileges and ſuccours, which common con"verts enjoyed in the generation immediately "pre-

"preceding [1]." Now it is granted by all Proteſtant Doctors, and in particular by theſe two: that the Governors of the Church were in ſome age or other actually deprived of thoſe miraculous ſuccours, which their predeceſſors had enjoyed; yet the time, when this alteration happened, is a ſecret, which, as Dr. *Church* ſays, it is very difficult and perhaps impoſſible to us, to diſcover [2]. And, if I ſhould aſk the reaſon, he would tell me preſently, becauſe the Fathers, as if aſhamed to tell us how they had forfeited thoſe favors, were wholly ſilent on that article. And thus Dr. *Dodwell's* argument is utterly confuted by fact and experience as well as their own conceſſions.

But the moſt remarkable circumſtance in the preſent quæſtion is, that though all Proteſtants are agreed in allowing and believing, that after the third or fourth century at leaſt, all true miracles actually ceaſed, yet in all the ſucceeding ages, there is not a ſingle leader or Governor of the Church, who either owns any ſuch ceſſation, or does not in the moſt grave and ſolemn manner atteſt the continuance of them in great abundance to his own age. Wherefore, as the ſilence of the Apoſtolic Fathers is ſingular, and not to be found in any other age whatſoever, from the days of the Apoſtles, down to the time of the Reformation; ſo that their circumſtances and characters, we may imagine, were ſingular alſo, and unlike to thoſe of every other age: by

[1] Dod. p. 41. [2] Ch. p. 4.

being deſtitute of thoſe extraordinary powers, which their predeceſſors the Apoſtles had enjoyed; yet unwilling to ſupply them by forgeries as their ſucceſſors are ſuppoſed, and the greateſt part of them allowed to have done.

Thus we ſee, how theſe Doctors, after all their efforts, to ſtrain and wreſt to their purpoſe, two or three obſcure paſſages of theſe Apoſtolic Fathers, have not been able to draw out the leaſt proof, of the ſubſiſtence of any miraculous powers among them; eſpecially of thoſe, which are the proper ſubject of this inquiry. For this is a diſtinction, which I find myſelf obliged to repeat, ſince all theſe Anſwerers, who appear to have known nothing of the ſtate of the primitive miracles, but what they learnt from my book, have not yet learnt from it, as in the firſt place they ought to have done, a right ſtate of the quæſtion. The poſition, which I affirm, is, that, after the days of the Apoſtles, no ſtanding power of working miracles was continued to the Church, to which they might perpetually appeal for the conviction of unbelievers. This is what the title of my work implies; what my whole reaſoning turns upon; and what I have often ſignified in the courſe of it, to be my preciſe meaning. Yet all my antagoniſts treat my argument, as if it abſolutely rejected every thing of a miraculous kind, whether wrought within the Church by the agency of men, or on any other occaſion, by the immediate hand of God. That God can work miracles whenever he pleaſes, no body, I

dare

dare ſay, will deny: but whether he has wrought any or not, ſince the days of the Apoſtles, is an inquiry, which I do not at all enter into: the ſingle point, which I maintain, is, that the Church had no ſtanding power of working any.

This diſtinction was ſeen at once by thoſe writers, who have appeared in the defence of my book, and who have juſtly rebuked theſe Anſwerers for their neglect of it; as being neceſſary to a right management of the diſpute, and obvious to every reader [1]. Yet in defiance of this admonition, they ſtill declare it to be a mere evaſion and ſubterfuge, never intended by me at firſt, but an after-thought, contrived to elude the force of ſome objections, which were found to preſs me [2].

The diſtinction however, though juſt and clear, was not marked out by me, for the ſake of any advantage, which I might derive from it to my cauſe, for I know none, which it could give, but merely to ſhorten the diſpute, and to prevent unneceſſary wranglings, on facts and inſtances, which do not belong to it. For though I have no better opinion perhaps of the Miracles, ſaid to have been wrought without the Church, than of thoſe, which are affirmed to have been performed within it; yet as I confine my argument intirely to the latter ſort; I would not be drawn away, to an examination of facts, foreign to my purpoſe, and but little regarded at preſent in the Chriſtian world, from my more

[1] T. p. 29. Let. 16. [2]. Ch. Pref. p. 8, 9.

important taſk, of diſſolving a chain of pretended Miracles which at this very day enſlaves and ties down the whole Chriſtian Church, to certain doctrines and practices, which tend to debaſe the ſimplicity of the Goſpel, and to give a ſuperſtitious turn to the piety and devotion of its profeſſors. If my adverſaries therefore had paid a due regard to the diſtinction juſt mentioned, it would have ſaved them ſome trouble in many inſtances, and eſpecially in the ſtory of *Polycarp's* Martyrdom, and the Miracles which accompanied it: on the defence of which they now exert all their zeal, declaring them to be deciſive, and to have utterly overthrown my whole Scheme [1]. Whereas in truth, whatever be the real character of them, they are nothing at all to the purpoſe, as being neither wrought by any ſtanding power in the Church, nor carrying any ſort of evidence, that any ſuch power was then ſubſiſting in it.

But if theſe Miracles have no relation, as I ſay, to the preſent diſpute, it is aſked, for what reaſon then did I introduce them into it? To which I anſwer, that it was for no other, than to expoſe the trifling and frivolous nature of them; and to ſhew, how fondly the Chriſtians of this early age were diſpoſed to give a miraculous turn to every unuſual incident, which might happen to take place on any important and affecting occaſion. My manner of introducing them declares my contempt of them; and I thought,

[1] In. p. 9. D. p. 36.

that

that a bare recital of them would render them as contemptible to others as they appeared to myſelf [1]. But I have miſſed my aim with theſe Anſwerers, who have the confidence ſtill to affirm, that I do not diſpute the reality of them, but leave them in poſſeſſion of Miracles, as great and wonderful as any in the Chriſtian Church; that I ſtand convicted by my own conceſſions; and by acknowledging the genuineneſs of the Epiſtle, confirm the genuineneſs of the facts related in it: than which nothing can be more ſenſeleſs and abſurd. For though I call that piece one of the moſt authentic in all antiquity, I ſhew at the ſame time, that I am not declaring my own opinion, but that which was generally held of it by the Church: and when I mention the advertiſement annexed to the end of it, concerning the miraculous diſcovery of the ſame piece by a revelation from *Polycarp*, will any imagine, that I could believe ſo ſilly a fiction, though I made no reflection upon it? No, I took the very mention of it, as I have ſaid, to be a clear detection of its forged character.

Wherefore all, which I now propoſe to add on the ſubject of this wonderful Martyrdom, ſhall be reſtrained to the article of *the Dove*, ſaid to fly out of the wound, that was made in the body of the Saint; this all my Antagoniſts give up at once as incredible, and conſider it either as the blunder of the tranſcriber, by putting one word for another; or as an interpolation craftily

[1] Free Inq. p. 124.

inſerted

inſerted into the text, after the time of *Euſebius*, who, in the abſtract, which he has given of this ſame narrative, takes no notice of this flight of the Dove. They are all aware, that if this article ſhould be thought genuin it would overthrow the credit of all the other Miracles in the ſame narrative; which for that reaſon they take great pains to clear from this fable, as they call it, which yet in defiance of all their efforts, will, upon a fair and critical examination, appear to be as authentic a part of the original piece, as any other miraculous fact related in it.

The firſt edition of the intire Epiſtle was publiſhed by Archbiſhop *Uſher*, with the paſſage of the Dove in it, from a Latin verſion, the oldeſt copy, as he tells us, of the whole piece, that was any where extant; ſuppoſed to have been written ſoon after the time of *Euſebius*, and to be the ſame, which is mentioned to have been publicly read in the Churches of *France*, till the ſixth century: which Copy Archbiſhop *Wake* alſo declares to be ſo well atteſted, that we need no further aſſurance of the facts which it contains[1]. All the Greek copies are of a later date, than the Latin verſion, yet all of them retain this article of the Dove: and from a collation of theſe the learned *Cotelerius* and *Ruinart* publiſhed their ſeveral editions of this ſame Epiſtle; both of them though Papiſts, very candid and judicious inquirers into the genuin monuments of Chriſtian antiquity: and in the laſt

[1] Wake's Prel. Diſc. p. 59.

edition

edition alſo, ſet forth by that eminent and proteſtant Critic M. *Le Clerc*, who was never ſuſpected either of ſuperſtition or credulity, the Dove ſtill keeps its place, without any reflection or cenſure upon it by the Editor.

Archbiſhop *Wake* indeed has omitted it in his Engliſh Tranſlation, for which he makes the following apology; "I confeſs, I am ſo little a "friend to ſuch kinds of Miracles, that I thought "it better, with *Euſebius*, to omit that circum-"ſtance, than to mention it from Biſhop *Uſher's* "Manuſcript. And indeed beſides the ſtrange-"neſs of ſuch an adventure, I cannot think, had "any ſuch thing truely happened at his death, "that not onely *Euſebius* ſhould be ignorant of "it, but that neither St. *Hierom*, nor *Ruffinus*, "nor the *Menæa* of the Greek Church ſhould not "have made the leaſt mention of it. Where-"fore there muſt have been either ſome inter-"polation, or becauſe that does not appear, it "may perhaps be better accounted for by the "miſtake of a ſingle letter [1]." This miſtake M. *Le Moyne* has endeavoured to correct by an ingenious emendation; which ſome of my Antagoniſts lay hold of, and others reject and prefer the notion of an interpolation as the beſt ſolution of the matter [2].

There is one reflection, however, added here by the Archbiſhop, which might have induced him, one would think, to have given us this ſtory as intire, as he had found it in all the edi-

[1] Wake's Prel. Diſc. p. 57. [2] Ch. p. 277.

tions; for, if it has any weight in it, it refutes at once all the vain conjectures of theſe minute Critics, and proves the circumſtance *of the Dove* to have been an original part of the manuſcript. For he obſerves, upon the authority of M. *Le Moyne*, that *Lucian*, in his raillery on the death of *Peregrinus*, who voluntarily committed himſelf to the flames, in the ſight of all *Greece* at the *Olympic* games; and out of whoſe funeral pile he makes a Vultur to aſcend, is ſuppoſed under the character of that frantic Philoſopher, and his Vultur, to ridicule the Martyrdom and Pigeon of *Polycarp* [1]. The reflection is allowed by the Archbiſhop to have *ſomething of a foundation:* and men of ſenſe, I dare ſay, will think it to have a good one, when they conſider, that the death of *Peregrinus* happened about the ſame time with that of *Polycarp*; and that *Lucian* was contemporary with them; an Apoſtate from Chriſtianity, and ever after its bitter enemy; and taking all occaſions, to deride the doctrines, the rites, the credulity and ſuperſtition of its profeſſors. There is a ſecond obſervation, intimated alſo by the ſame Archbiſhop, which ſeems to give a further confirmation to the genuineneſs of *Polycarp's Dove:* for he refers us, in a marginal note, to *Prudentius*, who celebrating, in one of his hymns, the Martyrdom of a noble Virgin, called *Eulalia*, makes *a Dove to fly out of her mouth*, at the very moment, in which ſhe expired. Now a fiction of ſo ſtrange a kind would

[1] Wake's Prel. Diſc. p. 57.

hardly have been hazarded, one would think, by ſo pious a writer, if there had not been a precedent for it, in the more famous Martyrdom of *Polycarp*.

There is nothing now left, to diſcredit the ſtory of *the Dove*, but the ſilence of *Euſebius* with regard to it; whoſe account of this Martyrdom is allowed to be the oldeſt of any other whatſoever. But it muſt be obſerved, that *Euſebius* does not give us here the intire narrative, but an abſtract of it onely, or an abridgment, proper to be inſerted into his general hiſtory; in which the writer, according to his own diſcretion and judgement, always omits whatever he thinks inſignificant, or unneceſſary, or of ſuſpicious credit, or improper to be offered to public view. In the abſtract then, which was not written by him till about two hundred years after the fact, he has thrown out many paſſages which he found in all the earlier copies, and which are ſtill found in all the modern editions, and among the reſt, even one of the miraculous kind, in which the body of the Saint is ſaid, *to have ſtood in the midſt of the flames, not as fleſh, which is burnt, but as bread, which is baked* [1]. Now the ſentence here omitted, is found in all the editions, in common with the article of the Dove; yet is not imputed to any miſtake, or interpolation of a later date, but to the deſign and choice of the compiler, who might think the compariſon of *Polycarp's body in the flames*

[1] P. 15.

with

with bread baked in an oven, too coarſe and unnatural to deſerve a place in his Hiſtory.

But whatever reaſon *Euſebius* might have for the omiſſion of this paſſage, he had certainly a much greater for the omiſſion of *the Dove*. The copies of this narrative appear to have been very rare, ſo that the ſcandal which this particular ſtory might have given, had not yet reached far, but lain dormant as it were and obſcure among a few onely: but if *Euſebius* had tranſcribed it into his Hiſtory, it would ſoon have been ſpread into all hands, and even of the chief perſons of the Empire, which was now become Chriſtian. We cannot doubt therefore, but that he wilfully dropt it out of his abſtract, as theſe champions are now endeavouring to throw it out of all the copies: yet not on the account of its being a miſtake or interpolation of any tranſcriber, but becauſe every body would ſee it to be a moſt flagrant and ſhameful fiction. In ſhort; as the ſtory is of a kind, which was much more likely to be dropped, when found in any copy, than after it had been dropped to be recalled into it again; ſo it is not credible, that, after ſo great a man as *Euſebius* had publiſhed the narrative itſelf without it, any one would have the hardineſs to inſert or interpolate it, if it had not been found in all the other copies, which lay diſperſed in different hands, and believed to be a genuin part of the original piece. As to the ſilence of the later writers about it, it is of no weight at all: they followed onely the tranſcript of *Euſe-*

bius,

bius, and were glad to get rid of ſo ridiculous a fiction, when they had ſo good an authority to plead for the omiſſion of it.

I ſhall now diſmiſs the miracles of *Polycarp's martyrdom*, on which, tho' they have no relation to the quæſtion in diſpute, and are in themſelves utterly contemptible, my Anſwerers lay the greateſt ſtreſs, as if they were ſubverſive of my whole argument. They have my leave however, to enjoy them, and inſult me with them as much as they pleaſe; but will find in the end, that the more pains they take to hold them up, the more they will hurt their own cauſe and ſtrengthen mine. Since men of ſenſe will never be brought to believe that any true Miracles could be ſubſiſting in that age, which has no better ſpecimen of them to give us, than this; nothing but a perplexed and patched up ſtory of a few trifling facts, of a precarious interpretation, which may reaſonably be imputed to the fiction of an Enthuſiaſtic piety, ever flattering and deluding itſelf with a vain perſuaſion of the preſent influence and interpoſition of the Deity.

And that this will certainly be the fate of theſe Miracles is confirmed to us already in ſome meaſure by the authority of a very learned and judicious writer, who, without any reſpect to the preſent controverſy, treating on the proper credibility of Miracles in general, and taking occaſion, in the courſe of his argument, to conſider the narrative of *Polycarp's Martyrdom*, finds it neceſſary to declare, from the impertinence and

and inconſiſtence of the miraculous facts related in it, *that there is great reaſon to be jealous of the veracity of the compiler, and juſt ground to ſuſpect the credit of a ſtory in which we ſee, that there has been tampering* [1].

[1] See Two Previous quæſtions impartially conſidered, p. 26, 30.

N. B. The Martyrdom of Biſhop *Hooper*, in the Reign of Queen *Mary*, is compared by the Compiler of it, *J. Fox*, to that of *Polycarp*, from a ſimilitude of ſeveral circumſtances, which are aſcribed to them both. I thought it proper therefore to preſent the reader with a ſhort abſtract of it, and a reflection or two to illuſtrate the compariſon.

When this Biſhop was faſtened to the ſtake, and the officers were going to bind his neck and legs with hoops of iron, he utterly refuſed them, as *Polycarp* is ſaid to have done, and would have none; ſaying; I am well aſſured, that I ſhall not trouble you, and doubt not but that God will give me ſtrength ſufficient to abide the extremity of the fire. The fire did not preſently kindle, being made of green faggots, which were mingled with reeds to quicken them: at length however it burned about him, but the wind having full ſtrength in that place, blew the flame from him, ſo that he was no more but touched by the fire. Within a ſpace after, a few faggots were brought, and a new fire kindled with them, which burned at the nether parts, being driven about by the wind, ſave that it did burn his hair, and ſcorch his ſkin a little. — When the ſecond fire was ſpent, he wiped both his eyes with his hands, and, beholding the people, ſaid with an indifferent loud voice, for God's love, good people, let me have more fire. All this while his nether parts were burning, but the faggots were ſo few, that the flame did not ſtrongly burn his upper parts till a third and more vigorous fire being kindled ſome time after put an end to his life. Thus he ſtood three quarters of an hour or more in the fire, even as a lamb, and patiently abode the extremity thereof, neither moving forwards nor

As

As to the teſtimonies of the ſucceeding Fathers, which come next to be conſidered, it is

backwards, nor to either ſide, till his nether parts being burnt, and his bowels fallen out, he died as quietly as a child in his bed. *See Fox Chronic.* vol. iii. p. 156.

Now there is as much reaſon to imagine a miraculous interpoſition in the Martyrdom of this Biſhop, as in that of *Polycarp*. The flame blown all about him by the wind, ſcorched his ſkin, yet burnt his hair; which ſhews, that in ſome turnings of it, it muſt have made the reſemblance as it were of an arch, as it is ſaid to have done around *Polycarp*, or it could not have had that effect of burning the hair of his head, while it onely ſcorched his body, which may be ſaid therefore, as truly as *Polycarp's, to have ſtood in the midſt of it, not as fleſh that is burnt, but as bread that is baked.* But when the ſecond fire was found ineffectual to burn him, if the executioner had then diſpatched him with a ſword, there would have been a better pretence for a Miracle, than in the caſe of *Polycarp:* for he ſuffered the trial onely of one fire without being burnt, but this Martyr of two. There is another circumſtance obſerved by the Hiſtorian, which made *Polycarp's* Martyrdom leſs grievous than this of *Hooper*, for when the fire did not burn, they miniſtered a quick diſpatch to *Polycarp* by a ſword, moved probably by ſome compaſſion, but the tormentors of *Hooper* ſuffered him without compaſſion, to ſtand three quarters of an hour in the fire. As to a voice from Heaven to encourage the Martyr, whatever uſe it might be of in *Polycarp's* caſe, there was no occaſion for it here: *Hooper* had an aſſurance within his own breaſt, which he accordingly declared, that God would give him ſtrength to endure the extremity of the fire: and the event ſhewed that ſuch ſtrength was actually given to him, and that his declaration therefore was prophetical: and the patience and fortitude with which he bore his ſufferings, may juſtly be thought as miraculous, as of any the moſt celebrated Martyrs of the primitive ages.

agreed on all ſides, that they ſtrongly and explicitely affirm the continuance of many extraordinary gifts and miraculous powers, as conſtantly exerted in the Church through each ſucceeding age. On this head then my Anſwerers allow, that I have fairly drawn out all the principal teſtimonies, which relate to our quæſtion, and enumerated all the extraordinary gifts and powers which theſe Fathers declare to have ſubſiſted among them. Nay inſtead of charging me with the ſuppreſſion of any, their ſole exception is, that I have added one to the liſt, which does not belong to it, and which none of the Fathers have any where clamed, *viz. the gift of expounding the Scriptures.* As this therefore is the onely point which theſe Doctors here diſpute with me, and which, as we ſhall preſently find, is a point of no ſmall importance to my main argument, ſo it will be neceſſary to employ a little pains in examining and clearing up the truth of it: where by opening the ground and reaſon of aſcribing this gift to the Church, I ſhall ſhew the reaſon alſo for which my Adverſaries ſo ſtiffly reject it.

Irenæus, ſpeaking of the miraculous powers which were frequent in his time, ſays; we hear many in the Church indued with prophetic gifts; ſpeaking with all kinds of tongues; laying open the ſecrets of men for the public good; and *expounding the myſteries of God* [1]. Now as by the myſteries of God, which are ſaid here to

[1] l. vi.

be

be expounded in the Church, nothing elſe can reaſonably be underſtood, but the myſteries propoſed to us in the ſcriptures, ſo in a recital of this gift in another part of my work, I call it *the gift of expounding the Scriptures*; as I think myſelf warranted to do, by the manifeſt ſenſe of the words, which ſeem incapable indeed of any other. Dr. *Dodwell*, on the other hand, declares; that in all the paſſages that I had cited, he does not find any ſuch claim of an extraordinary power of expounding the Holy Scriptures. *Irenæus* indeed ſpeaks of expounding the myſteries of God, but ſays not one word of the Holy Scriptures [1]. Dr. *Church* affirms the ſame thing, and ſays; that *in looking over the accounts, he finds nothing like any claim to a miraculous gift of expounding the Scriptures* [2]. But what a pityfull way of quibbling is this? the word, *ſcriptures*, is not expreſly mentioned in the teſtimony, therefore, the gift of expounding them cannot be implied in it. But if *the myſteries of God*, do not mean the ſame thing, I ſhould be glad to know what other meaning they can poſſibly have: for tho' our Doctors reject this, they give us no other in it's place, but leave the words to ſhift for themſelves, and the reader to take them in what ſenſe he pleaſes, provided, that he does not take them, for *the myſteries of the Goſpel*, which it is their buſineſs to deny.

[1] Dod. p. 57. [2] Ch. p. 127.

But beſides this paſſage of *Irenæus*, from which alone the thing itſelf may fairly be inferred, we learn from the expreſs and direct teſtimony of *Gregory*, called the wonder-worker, that the gift of expounding the Holy Scriptures was actually clamed and reckoned as one of the moſt eſteemed and excellent gifts of thoſe primitive times: and was poured out, in the largeſt meaſure, upon his Maſter *Origen*.

His words are; "*Origen* has received this "greateſt gift from God, with an abundant "ſhare of it from heaven; to be the Interpreter "of the words of God to men; to underſtand "the things of God, as if God himſelf were "ſpeaking, and to expound them to men, that "men alſo might hear them [1]."

This then is the gift, to which we are referred by *Irenæus*, whoſe words cannot poſſibly be underſtood of any other, unleſs we ſuppoſe thoſe early ages to have been entruſted with ſome ſecret myſteries, peculiar to themſelves, and unknown to their Succeſſors, and which God had not thought fit to revele to us in the ſacred Scriptures.

St. *Paul* calls himſelf and his fellow-laborers, *Apollos* and *Cephas*, *the ſtewards or diſpenſors of the myſteries of God* [2]. And in another place,

[1] Δῶρον τὸ μέγιστον ἔτος θεόθεν ἔχει λαβών, καὶ μοῖραν παγκάλην οὐρανόθεν, ἑρμηνεὺς εἶναι τῶν τοῦ Θεοῦ λόγων πρὸς ἀνθρώπους, συνιέναι τὰ θεῖα, ὡς θεοῦ λαλοῦντος, καὶ διηγεῖσθαι ἀνθρώποις, ὡς ἀκούσωσιν ἄνθρωποι. Vid. Greg. Thaum. Orat. Panegyr. in Orig. p. 73. D.

[2] 1 Cor. iv. 1.

alluding

alluding to the doctrines of the Goſpel, *great*, ſays he, *is the myſtery of godlineſs*; *God was manifeſted in the fleſh*; *juſtified in the ſpirit*, *ſeen of Angels*, *preached unto the Gentiles*, *believed on in the world*, *received up into glory* [1]. Again, ſpeaking of the Goſpel and the preaching of Jeſus Chriſt, he calls them, *the revelation* of the myſtery, which was kept ſecret ſince the world began [2]. I could mention ſeveral other places, where *the myſteries of God*, or of *his will*, or *of the Goſpel*, are applied by Chriſt himſelf, to denote the doctrines taught by the Goſpel. And ſurely a divine faculty of expounding the myſteries of God, which run through both the Teſtaments, and conſtitute the nobleſt and moſt ſublime parts of each, muſt have been one of the moſt uſeful and important of thoſe miraculous gifts, which are pretended to have been indulged to thoſe primitive ages. Since *the myſteries of God* then, as they are mentioned by *Irenæus*, muſt be underſtood to refer to the ſame myſteries, which are affirmed by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, to be reveled to us in the Holy Scriptures, the gift of expounding them cannot poſſibly ſignify any thing elſe, than the gift of expounding the moſt abſtruſe and difficult paſſages of the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Teſtament.

This point being thus ſettled, it opens my way to the defence of another, which I had affirmed in conſequence of it; that *Juſtin Martyr*

[1] 1 Tim. iii. 16. [2] Rom. xvi. 15.

lays claim to this gift of expounding the Scriptures, as indulged to him in an extraordinary manner, by the ſpecial grace of God. In proof of this, I have alledged three ſeveral paſſages from *Juſtin* himſelf, which I took to be ſtrong and expreſs to my point, and which had led ſeveral learned men before me into the ſame opinion. But with theſe more learned Doctors, my three teſtimonies from *Juſtin* are nothing at all to the purpoſe, nor imply the leaſt claim to any extraordinary gift; they inſiſt, that I wholly miſtake the matter, and through my ignorance of the proper ſenſe of the words, imagine them to ſignify ſomething divine and ſupernatural, when they ſignify nothing more than the *ordinary grace of God*, and *the ordinary aſſiſtance of the Spirit*, common, as they ſay, to all believers, and what every good Chriſtian was intituled to as well as *Juſtin* [1].

And here indeed I muſt confeſs the ignorance, with which I am charged by them of the proper ſenſe of theſe expreſſions, *the ordinary grace, and the ordinary aſſiſtance of the Holy Ghoſt.* They are uſed, I know, frequently among Chriſtians, but chiefly by that ſort, who know not what they mean, or rather mean nothing at all by them. But when Doctors of Divinity apply them, in the way of proof or argument, they ought ſurely to define the preciſe meaning of them, or otherwiſe, we cannot judge of the propriety, of what they pretend to deduce and infer from them. I

[1] D. p. 62. Ch. 131.

looked,

looked, therefore, into Dr. *Dodwell's* book, to diſcover, as well as I was able, in what ſenſe I might ſuppoſe him to have applied theſe phraſes; but inſtead of any ſatisfaction, I found nothing there but perplexity and confuſion. He ſays, "that the word χάρις or grace is never uſed to "deſcribe a ſupernatural gift, but known to "mean that ordinary co-operation of the Holy "Spirit with our beſt endeavours, which is "common to all believers; yet in the next "words he treats it as having no meaning at all, "but as a common way of ſpeaking, which "pious perſons accuſtom themſelves to, of "aſcribing every good thing, which they poſ- "ſeſs, to the grace of God: and ſo *Juſtin*, he "ſays, when he ſpeaks of his knowledge of the "Scriptures, as wholly obtained by grace, pro- "duces ſuch interpretations of them as appear "to have been drawn from his reaſon: yet, in "contradiction to all this, he declares at the "ſame time, that the aſſiſtance of the Spirit, be- "ing a power added to our nature, may there- "fore in ſome ſenſe be called *ſupernatural* [1]."

Dr. *Church* is juſt as confuſed, as his partner, in his account alſo of this *ordinary grace:* he reaſons upon it through a page or two, without giving us any hint of what he means by it, and without knowing it, I dare ſay, himſelf. The ſole explication which he attempts of it is, *that in general it is neceſſary to open men's underſtandings, that they may underſtand the Scriptures, and*

[1] Dod. p. 62, 3.

embrace the truths of the Goſpel contained therein, but implies nothing infallible, or miraculous, or any thing more than what any one might attain by his own power [1], *and enjoy if he would.* Now the onely idea, which I can form of the meaning which theſe Doctors would have us give to their phraſe, *of ordinary grace*, is, that we ſhould take it for a principle, neither abſolutely natural, nor ſupernatural, but of a mixed kind between both, and partaking alike of each; for under that character, it would be of excellent uſe in Theological controverſies, where the diſputants might make ſomething or nothing of it, juſt as their argument may require; might advance it to ſupernatural, when it wanted any help of that ſort, or when it demanded the contrary, might depreſs it to the ſtate of a mere human faculty. Being thus prepared and enlightened by the inſtruction of theſe Doctors for a right interpretation of the paſſages alledged from *Juſtin*, I now procede to a particular review and examination of them.

On the firſt of theſe paſſages, Dr. *Dodwell* obſerves, that I have not cited the whole, but referred to it onely, for which reaſon he thought it neceſſary to tranſlate the whole at large, which he has accordingly performed in the following words; "I will endeavours ſays *Juſtin*, in his "conference with a Jew, to explain to you the "Scriptures, without laboring to ſhew merely "any artificial ornament of language; for I

[1] Ch. p. 131.

"have

" have no talent of that ſort, but grace onely is " given to me of God, to underſtand the Scrip- " tures, of which grace I will pray, that all may " be freely and fully partakers, that I may not " for this, be liable to judgement, in that diſ- " penſation of it which God the Creator of " all things will exerciſe by my Lord Jeſus " Chriſt [1]."

Now in this paſſage *Juſtin* declares, that in the interpretations of Scripture, which he was going to lay before the Jew, he had no power or faculty of adorning them by any artful or elegant compoſition of words, *but that grace alone was given to him by God, to underſtand his Scriptures.* And here I ſhall once more affirm; that this is the expreſs claim of an extraordinary gift, and that the context alſo, from which our Doctors labor to draw a contrary ſenſe, clearly confirms mine. They inſiſt, on the other hand, that *Juſtin* had not the leaſt thought of claming any extraordinary endowment in this place, or any thing more, than ſuch a knowledge of the Scriptures, as every good Chriſtian might acquire by his own ſtrength as well as *Juſtin:* for he was not obliged *to pray*, ſays Dr. *Dodwell*, that all might be inſpired, if he had ſpoken of his own proficiency in the Scriptures in that ſenſe, but he thought himſelf bound *to pray*, that all might be favored with the knowledge of thoſe ſacred writings [2]. But the moſt ſurprizing circumſtance in this caſe is, how the notion of *Juſtin's*

[1] Dod. p. 60. [2] Ibid.

praying,

praying, as the tranſlation here makes him to do, could enter into the Doctor's head: or how it was poſſible, for any man, who has the leaſt tincture of Greek, to tranſlate the word παρακαλῶ, by *I will pray*. A verb, which implies no ſort of reference or alluſion whatſoever to prayer, or to any act or office, which can be addreſſed to God, but to man onely, in the ſenſe of exhorting, admoniſhing, and entreating, *&c.* But beſides this blunder, which is of the groſſeſt kind, he makes a ſecond alſo, and that no ſlight one, in the ſame verb, by giving it the ſenſe of a future time, when it abſolutely indicates the preſent. Dr. *Church*, indeed, has rightly tranſlated the verb, by *I exhort and beſeech all*, to become partakers, *&c.* but the turn which he gives to the whole, and the inference which he draws from it, is the ſame with his Partner's, weak and falſe. They both reaſon upon it in the ſame manner; the one, that *Juſtin* could not have prayed; the other, that he could not have exhorted the Jews, with whom he was diſcourſing to partake of a gift, which they could not acquire by any endeavours of their own: for to exhort a man to acquire what is not in his power, is a flagrant inſult upon him [1]. But *Juſtin's* exhortation carries no abſurdity of that ſort in it, but confirms the ſenſe, which I have given of his claiming here, a divine and extraordinary gift: to which he immediately adds, of which grace, thus given to me, I exhort you

[1] Ch. p. 131.

all, without reward or envy, to become partakers, that I may not be found liable to puniſhment in the day of judgement. Where the exhortation has no ſort of reference to the acquiſition of any gift, either ordinary or extraordinary, nor any other meaning than to move them to take the benefit of that gift, which was given peculiarly to *Juſtin*, by attending to thoſe interpretations, which he was offering to them, and embracing that true ſenſe of the Scriptures, which he was now qualified to teach them. For on what other account could he be apprehenſive of any puniſhment from God at the laſt day, but for the neglect of imparting and communicating to others the benefit of that extraordinary gift, which had been indulged to himſelf of unfolding and explaning the myſteries of God? of which duty he was now diſcharging his conſcience, and throwing the guilt upon thoſe onely, who refuſed to pay a proper regard to it.

There are two other teſtimonies, which I have produced likewiſe to the ſame purpoſes and from this ſame dialogue, in one of which *Juſtin* ſays to the Jew; *Do you think, that I could ever have been able to underſtand theſe things from the Scriptures, if by the will of their author, I had not received the grace to underſtand them* [1]? In the other place, ſpeaking of Chriſt, as *the ſole reveler of the Father to all thoſe, who know him*, he ſays, *he has reveled to us therefore all thoſe things, which, by his grace, we have underſtood from the Scrip-*

[1] Di. p. 390.

tures.

tures [1]. But to theſe teſtimonies our Doctors anſwer, that *Juſtin* is not ſpeaking here of himſelf, but of the whole body of *the Chriſtians.* The words ἡμᾶς and ἐλάβομεν are plural, ſays Dr. *Church*, and ſeem plainly to relate to the Chriſtians in general [2]: And Dr. *Dodwell* has taken care to diſtinguiſh the plural ſenſe in his tranſlations of them. Yet they might have obſerved, that one of the ſame teſtimonies begins with a plural verb, which yet cannot admit any other interpretation, than of the ſingular number, as being addreſſed only to the ſingle perſon of *Trypho.* And this indeed is a common cuſtom with all writers, to uſe the plural terms *we* and *us*, when they expect to be underſtood as ſpeaking onely of themſelves. Dr. *Dodwell* himſelf will ſupply us with many inſtances of it. Speaking of my opinion, he ſays, it appears to *us* to be a dangerous error. And in ſeveral places we find him ſaying; if *we* were diſpoſed to make repriſals; if *we* interpret ſtrictly; this might ſtrongly be urged *on our ſide*, &c. [3]. If I had a mind therefore to trifle here, as theſe Doctors do, I might contend that Doctor *Dodwell* could not be the author of this book, but the ſecretary onely of ſome little Synod, who jointly compiled it; for the plural expreſſions which he ſo frequently uſes, *it appears to us*, &c. are the true ſynodical ſtyle, and cannot be applied to a ſingle perſon; were I diſpoſed there-

[1] Di. p. 352. [2] Ch. p. 132. [3] Dod. p. 4, 30, 41.

fore,

fore, I ſay, to cavil and divert the reader from the proper ſubject, I ſhould not be more impertinent than theſe Doctors have actually been; for as it is nothing to my purpoſe, whether Dr. *Dodwell's* book was written by himſelf, or with the aſſiſtance of friends, the matter of it being what alone I am concerned with; ſo it is not more to the purpoſe of theſe Doctors, whether *Juſtin* ſpeaks here onely of himſelf, or of a number of Chriſtians: for if he affirms either of himſelf or of all, that they were inſpired by God with the right interpretation of his Scriptures, that is the whole, which I contend for: and that he actually does affirm it, will appear, I think, unquæſtionably to every man unprejudiced, who conſiders the joint force of the three teſtimonies, which I have produced in the proof of it: and yet *Juſtin* is not talking of any common or ordinary points of the Scriptures, but of the moſt abſtruſe and recondite paſſages of the Old Teſtament, in which, as in a veil, the chief evidences of the Meſſiah were ſuppoſed to have been wrapped up. The ſame teſtimonies, as I have already hinted, have ever been underſtood in the ſame ſenſe, which I have given to them, by all men of learning, who have any eſteem for the Antient Fathers; and eſpecially by thoſe, who were the moſt eminently acquainted with the principles and monuments of primitive antiquity. Thus the learned *Halloix*, in his *Life of Juſtin*, affirms; that in his Dialogue with *Trypho* he ſeveral times declares,

"that

" that the gift of underſtanding the Scriptures,
" was conferred upon him in a divine or extra-
" ordinary manner; and that ſo great and bene-
" ficial a talent, intruſted to his hands, made
" him extremely ſollicitous, leſt it ſhould prove
" unfruitful, and be kept up by him as an uſe-
" leſs and hidden treaſure [1]." Mr. *Tillemont* alſo, who, of all men, has publiſhed the moſt exact and voluminous collection, of the writings, the doctrines, the characters, and the lives of thoſe primitive Fathers, obſerves, " that of all " the extraordinary graces, which the Holy " Spirit beſtowed upon the Church in thoſe " times, there were few ſo conſiderable, as that " *of underſtanding* the Scriptures, which was " communicated by ſingular favor to *Juſtin* [2]."

This then will appear at laſt to be the genuin caſe of the gift of expounding the Scriptures or the myſteries of God. It is expreſly atteſted by *Irenæus*; was ever reckoned among the extraordinary gifts of thoſe times; was clamed eſpecially by *Juſtin*; and is affirmed to have been largely poured out upon *Origen*. Yet the moſt learned and inquiſitive of our Proteſtant Divines, and even thoſe, who pay the greateſt reverence to the characters of the Fathers, are forced to confeſs, that they cannot diſcover the leaſt inſtance or trace of any ſuch gift in the writings of thoſe Fathers; but on the contrary, that their interpretations of the Scriptures are generally ſo unnatural, and extravagant, that

[1] 4. p. 23. not. [2] P. 2, 358, 380.

inſtead

inſtead of being the dictates of a divine inſpiration, they ſeem to be the effects rather of an unſound mind and diſordered reaſon. Wherefore the falſehood and impoſture ſo manifeſtly diſcovered, and even confeſſed in the claim of this particular gift, muſt needs leave a ſtrong ſuſpicion, upon the authority of all the reſt. Yet theſe ſhall be heard likewiſe for themſelves, nor be implicitely condemned, till they have had a fair trial. For which purpoſe I ſhall procede to review two or three of the principal of them, and examine, what pretenſions they can juſtly make to that credit and belief which they ſtill generally obtain among Chriſtians.

The next miracle, which I propoſe to examine is, that *of raiſing the dead.* Which *Irenæus* expreſly affirms, *to have been frequently performed in thoſe days on neceſſary occaſions, by great faſting and the joint ſupplications of the Church of the place: and that the perſons he raiſed had lived afterwards among them many years* [1]. Now on this article, as Dr. *Dodwell* rightly obſerves, *there is great ſtreſs to be laid* [2]. I ſhall lay as much upon it therefore, as he pleaſes; ſhall conſent, that the iſſue of the whole may reſt upon it, and that the proofs and evidence of this capital Miracle, may determine the fate of all the reſt.

By way of objection to this teſtimony of *Irenæus*, I had obſerved, "that if a Miracle of ſo "ſurpriſing a nature had been *ſo frequent*, as he

[1] P. 186. 88. [2] Dod. p. 78.

"declares

" declares it to have been; performed, as it " were in every pariſh, or place, where there " was a Chriſtian Church, it muſt have made a " great noiſe in the world, and been celebrated " not onely by the Primitive Fathers, but by " all Hiſtorians or Writers of thoſe times [1]." But here they cavil a while at the frequency, which I aſcribe to this Miracle: *To ſuppoſe this Miracle*, ſays Dr. *Church*, *to have been common in every place, where there was a Society of Chriſtians, or a Church, is a miſtake grounded on a falſe conſtruction of* Irenæus's *words* [2]. Which, tho' confidently affirmed and repeated by him, is utterly falſe. *Irenæus* atteſts it, as we have ſeen, to have been *frequently performed on neceſſary occaſions, by the faſting and joint ſupplication of the Church of the place:* which words, as they limit it to no particular place, ſo they neceſſarily imply it to have been common alike to all places, wherever there was a proper occaſion, and a Society of Chriſtians to pray for it; which is the very ſenſe, that I had given to them. And from the ſame words, Mr. *Dodwell*, the Father, has inferred, that the inſtances of this Miracle were more numerous in this age, than in that even of the Apoſtles: *They raiſed the dead*, ſays he, *in the Apoſtolic Churches, yet we have few examples of it, in the genuin acts of the Apoſtles; but in* Irenæus's *days, they raiſed not a few, but very often* [3].

As to the other part of my objection, that ſo wonderful a fact, if it had been frequent, muſt

[1] Free Inq. p. 72. [2] Ch. p. 189. [3] P. 42.

have

have made great noiſe in the world, and been celebrated by all writers, they treat it with much contempt. "Who ſhould be expected to re-"cord theſe inſtances? ſays Dr. *Dodwell*, the "Heathen Hiſtorians would not, if they had "known and believed them, for it would have "been an act of ſelf condemnation in them; "neither would Chriſtian Hiſtorians, if ſuch "there had been; for this would have been "drawing down unneceſſarily perſecution upon "thoſe particular perſons; when a general aſ-"ſertion of the facts would ſerve their argument "as well [1]." "By what Hiſtorians, ſays Dr. "*Church*, would this gentleman have had theſe "Miracles celebrated? By Jewiſh or Heathen "ones? this was not to be expected. Could "they have diſproved ſuch accounts, no doubt "but they would have been glad to do it, and "we may depend upon it, that this had been "done; but to celebrate them, was what they "were little inclined to, if indeed they gave "themſelves any trouble to examine them[2]:" Another of my Anſwerers argues alſo in the ſame ſtrain: "'Tis not probable, ſays he, a "Heathen Hiſtorian would have related ſuch a "fact, had he known it. 'Tis equally impro-"bable, he ſhould know it: ſeeing the Chriſtians "knew, with whom they had to do; and that, "had ſuch an inſtance been made publick, they "would not long have enjoyed him, who had "been given back to their prayers [3]." The

[1] Dod. p. 78. [2] Ch. p. 186. [3] P. 114.

reader ſurely muſt think it ſtrange, that men who know any thing of human nature, or the hiſtory of paſt ages, can reaſon at ſo wild a rate, or imagine, that an Heathen, though he had ſeen the fact performed before his eyes, could reſolve to ſtifle the impreſſion, and perſiſt to deny the reality of it. Had the Heathens no curioſity, no love of truth, no deſire of knowledge, in points of the higheſt importance? Yes; they poſſeſſed thoſe principles in a very great degree. The Superſtition and Idolatry of the popular religions, had long been contemned by all the wiſe and virtuous among them, who were perpetually ſearching after a more perfect and excellent rule. Theſe ſearches gave birth to various ſects of Philoſophy; ſome of which maintained the exiſtence, the unity, and providence of God; the immortality of the ſoul, *&c.* Others alſo taught the ſame doctrines, but as probable onely, not certain: while ſome ſtill doubted, and even flatly denied them all. On theſe points therefore, continual diſputes and arguments were carried on, in all the politer parts of the Heathen world; and eſpecially in *Greece* and *Rome*; ſo that, in ſuch circumſtances, the ſight of a perſon raiſed from the dead, offered in ſuch a manner, as carried with it a demonſtration of its reality, muſt have been, of all ſpectacles, the moſt deſirable to a ſober and inquiſitive Heathen; as it would have ſettled all their deſputes, and corrected their philoſophy at once; and convinced them all, not onely of the

certainty of a reſurrection; but of that very ſort, which all philoſophy had ever held to be impoſſible, *the reſurrection of the body.*

Mr. *Millar*, in his Hiſtory *of the propagation of Chriſtianity*, a work particularly recommended to his readers by Dr. *Church*, obſerves, "that "by the good providence of God, philoſophy "began to flouriſh among the Heathens, a lit-"tle before the coming of Chriſt, which was of "great uſe to refine the minds of men, and ren-"der them capable of receiving the celeſtial and "ſublime truths of the Goſpel [1]." But theſe narrow minded Anſwerers, whoſe thoughts never reach farther, than the contrivance of an expedient, how to clear themſelves of a preſent difficulty, inſiſt; that an Heathen, though he had been an eye-witneſs of ſo ſtriking a fact, and intirely convinced of its truth, yet, in ſpite of all conviction, would have been inſenſible of the force of it, and incited onely, to perſecute and deſtroy the particular actors in it. Nay, their whole repreſentation of the matter tends to perſuade us, that if the Heathens had been invited to ſee the Miracle performed in their preſence, they would have knocked the man down, as ſoon as he began to riſe, and ſmothered him again in his grave, before he was got out of it.

Such nonſenſe as this, which they would put upon us here for argument, can hardly fail of perſuading every intelligent reader, that a claim of Miracles, which wants ſuch a defence, muſt

[1] Millar's Hiſt. p. 1.

neceſſarily be fictitious: yet they procede with great complacency, to confirm it by ſeveral curious obſervations. "We may obſerve in the "next place, ſays Dr. *Church*, that this Miracle "differs from others in one thing; that there is "no occaſion for its being openly performed. "Becauſe Infidels, who never had an opportu-"nity of ſeeing it, yet, if they have ſufficient "evidence of it, ought in reaſon and conſcience "to believe it. And ſufficient evidence of its "reality may eaſily be had, even though no one "witneſs was preſent at the working of it [1]."

This obſervation indeed is new, and purely his own; never heard, I dare ſay, before, or thought of by any man, but is ſo contrary to all the notions, which Hiſtory and experience have taught us on this article, that I cannot help wondering, whence it could come into this Doctor's head, or what facts and inſtances he can have to ground it upon. If the end of all Miracles be to create faith and conviction: and if when performed before our eyes, they impart a ſtronger conviction, than an hundred witneſſes can give, who had not ſeen them, it cannot be the peculiar difference of the greateſt of all Miracles, that it need be reported onely, not ſeen; and that, in diſtinction from all other Miracles, it ſhould require our belief, upon the teſtimony even of thoſe, who themſelves had not ſeen it: for ſurely, the more uncommon and ſurprizing

[1] Ch. p. 187.

the

the nature of any miracle may be, the more it will always want to be openly performed.

In the hiſtory of the Goſpel we find the Miracles of this kind, which were wrought by our Lord, to have been peformed by him, in broad day-light and the midſt of crouds. Thus in the City of *Nain*, the widow's ſon was raiſed from the bier, as they were carrying him to his grave, *in the ſight of much people: ſo that the rumor of it went forth through all* Judæa, *and all the region round about* [1]. *The daughter alſo of the Ruler* was raiſed by him in ſuch a manner, *that the fame of it is ſaid to have gone abroad into all the land* [2]. And in raiſing *Lazarus*, *Jeſus lift up his eyes, and ſaid; Father, I thank thee, that thou haſt heard me. And I knew, that thou heareſt me always; but becauſe of the people, which ſtand by, I ſaid it, that they may believe, that thou haſt ſent me. Upon which many of the Jews, who had ſeen the things, which he did, believed on him* [3].

What was it then, that could poſſibly ſuggeſt ſo crude an obſervation to our Doctor? Why nothing, but the character of this very primitive Miracle, which we are conſidering as it is ſtated and deſcribed by *Irenæus*. With this indeed his obſervation perfectly tallies: for this, we muſt own, was of a kind, which had no occaſion to be openly performed: the very report of it rendered it ſuſpected, and the production of it would have blaſted it. For as they themſelves allow,

[1] Luke vii. 17. [2] Matt. ix. 26. [3] John xi. 41, &c.

it was not deſigned for the public, nor the converſion of the Heathens; but to be performed onely in the dark, among a few of the faithful; on certain neceſſary occaſions; which are neither ſpecified, nor diſcoverable to any man. All which is ſo palpably contradictory to the character and effects of this particular Miracle, that it can hardly fail of convincing every reader, that the original claim of it was falſe; and the inſtances of it, which are ſaid to have ſubſiſted among the Chriſtians, mere fictions, contrived by the crafty and political, to feed the credulity of the pious and the ſimple.

But in what ever light we conſider the account of this Miracle, as it is given by *Irenæus* and defended by theſe Advocates, it will appear to be nothing elſe but a ridiculous and contemptible tale. For ſince the converſion of the Heathens, the moſt important of all ends, and to which all other Miracles were chiefly applied, was not intended by it, what *neceſſary occaſion* could there be for it, among the private and diſperſed Societies of the Chriſtians, or what cauſe of weight enough, to engage a whole Church in a courſe of faſting and prayer for the performance of it? The Chriſtians of this age, inſtead of being fond of life, were longing to be diſſolved, and to be with Chriſt; were thirſting after an immortality of glory, and offering themſelves forwardly to Martyrdom, that they might obtain it a few years the ſooner: they wanted no Miracle for the confirmation of their faith;

faith; the firmneſs of which was the ground of God's favor to them, and of their own fortitude, in ſuffering thoſe perſecutions, to which it expoſed them: they were perſuaded of the reſurrection of the body, and to pray therefore, to ſee an inſtance of it, would not have been an act of piety, but of levity. And to ſuppoſe, that a whole Congregation ſhould be induced to faſt and pray, that a departed friend, or parent, or huſband ſhould be reſtored to life, to relieve the preſent grief, or gratify the fond affection of particular perſons or families, cannot be thought a *neceſſary occaſion*, or an end worthy of the interpoſition of God.

Then as to the perſons, who were ſo raiſed; they could not poſſibly receive any imaginable benefit from a favor ſo extraordinary: for after they had been delivered from all the troubles of this life, it muſt have been an occaſion of miſery and mortification to them, to have been thrown back again into the midſt of them: and when they were arrived at their journey's end, and within the reach of that bliſs, which had been the object of all their hopes, and the end of all their wiſhes, to be thruſt back from it again at the very moment of fruition, muſt have been a diſappointment, of all others, the moſt grievous to a pious ſoul. And for this, what amends could they receive in being reſtored to ſo wretched a life, as they muſt have led from the time of their reſurrection; ſculking perpetually, and hiding themſelves among a few friends? ſince if they

happened to be diſcovered, they were ſure, as theſe Anſwerers tell us, of being deſtroyed by the Heathens.

But after all theſe evaſive expedients and ſenſeleſs conceits of theſe Doctors, it is not poſſible, from the nature of the thing, that this Miracle could have been conceled; or that the perſons, who were raiſed, and lived many years after it, could live undiſcovered by the Heathens. In every place, where there was a ſociety of Chriſtians, whether in a City, Town, or Village, the Heathens were by far the majority, and ſurrounded them on all ſides; ſo that a Chriſtian could not die, or be carried at leaſt to his grave, without being obſerved by ſome or other of his Heathen neighbours; much leſs could he be called again into life, without aſtoniſhing all thoſe, who had ever ſeen or known him before, and whoſe aſtoniſhment would preſently have been communicated through the whole neighbourhood: and as the ſame miracle is affirmed to have been worked indifferently in every place, where there was a neceſſary occaſion, and a number of Chriſtians, to faſt and pray for it; ſo the fame of it muſt needs have reached, as far as the Goſpel itſelf was then ſpread.

It is allowed, however, in the preſent caſe, that the Heathens knew nothing at all of the matter, but conſtantly held the fact itſelf to be impoſſible, which I have urged as a clear proof, that they had never ſeen or heard of its being performed, except in ſuch a manner, as carried with

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it a ſuſpicion of fraud and colluſion. But *this prepoſſeſſion*, ſays Dr. *Dodwell*, *was the very thing, which prevented their attending to it at all; for they could not think, that they needed particular circumſtances to diſprove that, which they thought impoſſible in itſelf* [1]: which, like all the reſt of his remarks on this article, has neither ſenſe nor force in it. For let us ſuppoſe the claim of this ſame Miracle to be made by any Chriſtians in our own days; in which there is not a ſingle Proteſtant of any judgement, who is not as ſtrongly prepoſſeſſed, as the Heathens antiently were, with a perſuaſion, that no mortal now living, nor any number of them, can poſſibly raiſe the dead. Yet, if he was well informed, that it had been done by any particular congregation, and upon an invitation to ſee it done by the ſame, ſhould there receive a full conviction of its reality, by ſeeing a perſon actually raiſed from the grave before his own eyes; he could not help adoring the power and majeſty of God, in a work of ſo wonderful a nature, and revering at the ſame time the ſanctity of thoſe men and their prayers, by which God was moved to interpoſe, in ſo extraordinary a manner. And this the Heathens themſelves would certainly have done in the ſame caſe; a Miracle of this ſort offered to the conviction of their ſenſes, would have ſtifled all their prejudices at once, how ſtrong ſoever they had been: for human nature was ever the ſame in all ages; and it was as im-

[1] Dod. p. 79.

poſſible,

poſſible, for men of judgement, to withſtand the clear evidence of their ſenſes in antient times, as it is, for men of the ſame character, to reject it in the preſent.

But I had offered one objection to the reality of this miraculous gift, which, of itſelf, I take to be deciſive, and a ſure proof, that the claim of it muſt have been falſe. The objection is this; "that in the very ſame age, in which *Irenæus* "declares this Miracle to be often performed, "and that perſons ſo raiſed had lived after- "wards among them many years; yet when "*Autolycus*, an eminent Heathen, challenged his "friend *Theophilus*, *Biſhop of* Antioch, to ſhew "him but one, who had been ſo raiſed among "the Chriſtians, with a promiſe of turning "Chriſtian upon it himſelf, *Theophilus* diſco- "vered by his anſwer, that he was not able to "give him that ſatisfaction [1]." Dr. *Dodwell* allows this objection to be plauſible, and the moſt to my purpoſe of any in my whole performance [2]. And in order to refute, or at leaſt to weaken its force, recurs to his uſual expedient of affirming, that *I have miſtaken the anſwer of* Theophilus, *given a wrong turn to it, and miſrepreſented it in ſeveral points*; to confirm which, he gives us a tranſlation of the whole, cooked up to his own ſenſe, in the following words.

"Farther, you deny the reſurrection of the "dead. For you ſay, ſhew me even one raiſed

[1] Free Inq. p. 73. [2] Dod. p. 79.

"from

" from the dead, on the ſight of which I will " believe. But in the firſt place, what great " thing is it, if you do believe, what you ſee " yourſelf. Farther, if you can believe, that " *Hercules*, that burned himſelf, does ſtill live; " and that *Eſculapius*, that was killed by light- " ning, was raiſed again; can you diſbelieve " the things, which are reported to you by " God himſelf? In like manner, if I ſhould " ſhew you one raiſed from the dead and ſtill " living, even this you would diſbelieve [1], *&c.*

From this paſſage, as it is here tranſlated, the doctor attempts to ſhew, that *Autolycus's* demand was, not to ſee a perſon, *who had been raiſed from the dead among the Chriſtians*, but to ſee one actually raiſed upon the ſpot, and in his preſence, by *Theophilus* himſelf; and that the onely point, which he was here ſpeaking of was *the general reſurrection of the dead; which he at preſent denied, but owned he would believe, if he could ſee an inſtance of it* [2]. An interpretation wholly foreign to the purpoſe, and utterly inconſiſtent with the genuin ſenſe of the words. For the firſt part of them, which chiefly relate to the point in quæſtion, ſhould be rendered thus: *But farther; you deny, that the dead are now raiſed; for you ſay, ſhew me but one, who has been raiſed from the dead, and by ſeeing him I will become a believer.*

[1] Dod. p. 83. [2] Ibid. p. 84.

This

This is the indiſputable ſenſe of the words, and exactly conformable to the repreſentation, that I had given of them: in which we ſee a plain reference to a report, which was then current and affirmed by all the Chriſtians of thoſe days, that there were ſeveral perſons actually living among them, who had been raiſed from the dead. This was the fact, which *Autolycus* could not believe, and on which therefore he required ſatisfaction from his friend *Theophilus*, by ſeeing an inſtance produced before him of any one who had been ſo raiſed: in which *Theophilus*, how deſirous ſoever he might be, to gratify him, was not able to do it. Every ſchool-boy would readily tell us, that νεκρὸς ἐγείρεσθαι [1], denotes an action of the preſent time, ἐγερθέντα one, that is paſt. Yet our Doctor to ſupport this paultry ſhift, of putting *the general reſurrection* upon us, as the ſole point here referred to, has quite reverſed the matter; and of the two capital words, on which the force of the whole ſentence turns, has given a future ſenſe to that, which indicates the preſent, and a preſent, to that which indicates the paſt; and to ſay the truth, his whole tranſlation betrays either ſuch a bigotry, as will not allow any ſenſe, in any words, which does not tally with his own prejudices; or ſuch an ignorance of the Greek, as

[1] Our Lord uſes the ſame form of expreſſion, in his anſwer to the meſſage ſent to him by *John the Baptiſt*, where among the other proofs of his Meſſiahſhip he adds, νεκροὶ ἐγείρονται, *the dead are raiſed up*. Matth. xi. 3.

is

is incapable of diſcovering what their ſenſe really is.

But what ſurprizes me the more in this tranſlation, is, that it flatly contradicts his Father's expoſition of it, from which, as being the ſame with my own, I hoped to have gained ſome little authority with him in an argument, which he owns to be plauſible. In other inſtances, we have found him ſtiffly adhering to the interpretations of his Father, and ſtrenuouſly defending them, though manifeſtly erroneous; which I could not help imputing to his piety, and zealous regard for the reputation of a learned and worthy parent. But what ſhall we ſay to him now, when we find him rejecting his Father's ſenſe, and declaring it to be *wrong*, though it be demonſtrably right, and what he ought to have embraced, if it had come from an adverſary. His Father perfectly knew, that the participle, ἐγερθέντα, could not poſſibly mean any thing elſe, in its proper and grammatical ſenſe, but a perſon, who had *already been raiſed from the dead:* but the ſon affirms it to ſignify one, who was about to be raiſed, or in the act of riſing, which ſhews, that he had nothing of that filial tenderneſs, with which I had imagined him to have been indued, but the true ſpirit of a controverſial zealot, whom neither the authority of Grammar, nor of a Father, nor of truth itſelf can move, whenever they thwart the Syſtem, which he had undertaken to defend.

But

But that *Autolycus's* demand wholly relates to a perſon, who *had been actually raiſed*, is proved beyond all doubt by *Theophilus's* anſwer to it, as it ſtands here tranſlated, even by the Doctor himſelf: *for if I ſhould ſhew you one*, ſays he, *raiſed from the dead, and ſtill living*, even this *you would diſbelieve:* which directly correſponds with that ſenſe of it, and cannot poſſibly do ſo with any other. As to the character of *Autolycus*, we know nothing more of it, than what may be collected from the writings of *Theophilus*, who addreſſed three books to him, containing an Apology for the Chriſtian religion, drawn with a particular view of ſatisfying *Autolycus's* ſcruples, and making him alſo a convert, as *Theophilus* himſelf was. From his familiarity and friendſhip with this eminent Biſhop, we may juſtly infer, that he was of a candid, reaſonable, and inquiſitive diſpoſition; a contemner of the Idolatry and Superſtition of the public religion, and deſirous to embrace a more rational worſhip if he could any where find it. In theſe circumſtances Chriſtianity was propoſed to him, to which he ſeems to have been inclined, but the miraculous pretenſions of the Chriſtians appear to have ſhocked him, and infuſed certain ſcruples, which were firſt to be removed. He could not believe, that they had the power, of which they boaſted, of *raiſing the dead*; or that there were any perſons then living among them, who had been ſo raiſed: this was the point, in which he required to be ſatisfied; and

if

if *Theophilus* would ſhew him an inſtance of any ſuch perſon, ſo as to convince him of the reality of the fact, he promiſed to turn Chriſtian upon it [1].

The demand was certainly reaſonable, and ſuitable to the character of a diſcreet, and ſober inquirer. And if the claim of this Miracle had been true, as it is affirmed by *Irenæus*; it could not have been difficult to have produced one; nor could there have been an occaſion more worthy of it, than the converſion of an illuſtrious and virtuous Heathen, who ſought and offered to become a believer on that very condition. Nor can we imagine, but that *Theophilus*, who was taking ſo much pains to convert him, and addreſſed three books to him with that very view, would not have been glad to have gratified him in this requeſt, if it had been in his power, and ſo procured his converſion at once. For it is very remarkable, that *Theophilus* does not excuſe himſelf from giving the ſatisfaction, which was deſired by alledging, what theſe modern Advocates take it into their heads to ſup-

[1] Dr. *Dodwell*, with his uſual obſtinacy, flatly denies that *Autolycus makes any ſuch promiſe*, in the paſſage above recited; yet the words themſelves are expreſs, ἵνα ἰδὼν πιστεύσω, and cannot poſſibly be interpreted to any other ſenſe: and we find the ſame verb πιστεύω, continually applied in the New Teſtament, in the ſame manner, to denote a man's becoming a believer, not of this or that particular point, but of the whole faith of Chriſt. *Mark* xv. 32. ἵνα ἴδωμεν καὶ πιστεύσωμεν. Matt. xxvii. 42. John ix. 38. ὁ δὲ ἔφη, πιστεύω, &c.

poſe,

poſe, that the perſons who had been raiſed ſome years before were now dead again the ſecond time; nor does he plead any difficulty in the production of an inſtance, on account of their being all diſperſed and removed to any diſtant countries; and much leſs, would he have ſaid, what our ingenious Doctors have contrived to ſay on this occaſion, that the production of ſuch a perſon, would have *expoſed him onely to perſecution*, or *to have been knocked on the head upon the ſpot:* but he inſiſts onely, that if he ſhould produce one, *Autolycus* would not ſtill believe it. Which ſhews, that all their pretended inſtances of this great Miracle were of a kind, that could not ſtand the teſt of a fair examination, nor give any ſatisfactory proof of their reality, to a candid and impartial inquirer. And this opinion will be the more clearly confirmed to us, by conſidering the ſhuffling, futile, and inconſiſtent account, which theſe Doctors have given of the conduct of *Theophilus*.

Dr. *Dodwell*, who by a groſs miſtake contends, that *Autolycus's* demand was, to ſee the Miracle of raiſing the dead, performed before his eyes by *Theophilus* himſelf, tells us, "that "to aſk, why ſuch a power was not granted on "this occaſion, for the ſatisfaction of *Autolycus*, "is entering into the counſels of his Provi- "dence, who might have good reaſons for not "vouchſafing this method of conviction to him. "That after the other evidence, which had "been offered to him, it might not be indeed

"proper

" proper to offer a Miracle for his conviction.
" But that if ſuch a Miracle had been wrought
" in his preſence, he would have found ſome
" way or other to evade it; would probably
" have ſuggeſted, that there was a confederacy
" between them, or have imputed the recovery
" to the force of art, or offered ſome ſuch eva-
" ſion, as hardned infidelity can always ſug-
" geſt [1]."

Dr. *Church* obſerves, " that Mr. *Dodwell*,
" the Father, thought this anſwer of *Theophilus*
" a proof, not onely that this Miracle had then
" ceaſed, or at leaſt was no longer common;
" but alſo, that thoſe, who had been raiſed, had,
" in the ſpace of forty years, been dead again.
" Which ſuppoſitions anſwer the difficulty, and
" are neither of them diſproved by me. How-
" ever, it muſt be owned, adds he, that *Autoly-*
" *cus's* demand was unreaſonable, eſpecially, if
" the caſe be, as Mr. *Dodwell's* ſon has endea-
" voured to ſhew, that *Autolycus's* demand was
" to ſee one raiſed from the dead in his ſight,
" and not one, who had been raiſed before;
" which would have been little or no ſatisfac-
" tion to him. By this way of conſidering the
" paſſage, the foundation of the objection is re-
" moved. On the whole, therefore, tho' *Theo-*
" *philus* did not produce any inſtance of this
" Miracle, to gratify the vain humour, and
" idle curioſity of his Antagoniſt; this cannot

[1] Dod. p. 78, 84.

" ſet aſide the poſitive and expreſs teſtimony of " *Irenæus* [1]."

Such is their way of refuting a poſitive fact; by a number of ſuppoſitions, either wholly vain and fanciful, or grounded on their own blunders and ignorance of the ſubject, which they are treating. The fact however is inconteſtible. *Autolycus* demanded to ſee a perſon, who had been raiſed from the dead; could not be gratified in that demand; for which our Doctors think it a ſufficient apology, to ſay, " that " Providence might judge it improper, to give " that conviction, to *his vain humour and idle* " *curioſity*; that there was evidence enough of " another ſort, which ought to have convinced " him; and if a Miracle had been wrought for " the purpoſe in his preſence, he was ſuch an *hard-* " *ned Infidel*, that it would have made no impreſ- " ſion upon him." Whereas the whole, which we can fairly collect, either of the nature of the man, or of his demand, is; that he was a candid inquirer after truth, and ready to embrace it, wherever it could be found; and that his demand, inſtead of being the effect of any idle humor or curioſity, was the reſult of a ſerious and deliberate intention, to become a convert to Chriſtianity, if he could be convinced onely of this ſingle point, *that there were any perſons then living among the Chriſtians, who had been raiſed from the dead.* And the ſole inference, which we can reaſonably draw from the inabi-

[1] Ch. p. 189.

lity

lity of this Biſhop to give him that ſatisfaction, is; that there were no ſuch perſons then in being; and conſequently, no ſuch miraculous gift then ſubſiſting in the Church, how poſitively ſoever it may be atteſted by *Irenæus*; *Theophilus* lived in the ſame age with him; and tho' we ſhould ſuppoſe him to have been ſomewhat younger, and to have lived ſome years longer, yet if the Miracle itſelf had ceaſed, after it had been exerted for ſome ſhort time, according to the teſtimony of *Irenæus*; or if the perſons, who had been raiſed in the days of *Irenæus*, were all dead again before *Theophilus* wrote, it is certain, that he would have mentioned either the one, or the other, to excuſe his want of power to ſatisfy his friend. But he had no ſuch excuſe to make; and the conceits of this ſort, to which our modern Advocates now recur, are but the vain expedients of men, laboring to prop up a lame cauſe, unable to ſupport itſelf, by the help of fictitious circumſtances, of their own invention.

Beſides all theſe various improbabilities, which appear upon the very face of this miraculous gift; I have obſerved, that it ſtands upon the ſingle teſtimony of *Irenæus* [1], and is not mentioned or referred to in any manner, by any of the ſucceeding Fathers, through the three firſt centuries: which circumſtance alone ſeems to be ſufficient to blaſt it's credit. For it is ſcarce poſſible to conceive, if this gift had

[1] Free Inq. p. 188.

really ſubſiſted in *Irenæus's* days, and in ſo full a meaſure, as he affirms it to have done, that all the later writers, and the Apologiſts eſpecially, could have omitted the mention of it, or ſuffered the memory of a fact, ſo reputable to their cauſe, to have been loſt and buried in oblivion, when they make it their buſineſs to diſplay, in the ſtrongeſt terms, every other miraculous power, which they pretend to have been indulged to them from heaven; *of caſting out Devils, curing diſeaſes, prophetic trances*, &c. This, I ſay, might reaſonably incline us to ſuſpect, that this attempt of ſome of the more crafty Chriſtians, to aſſert and keep up a pretenſion to this primary Miracle, having been found vain and impracticable, and without any other effect, than of drawing the greater deriſion and contempt upon them from the Heathens, they prudently choſe to drop and bury it for the future in utter ſilence.

I have further obſerved, that in the earlier times alſo, after the days of the Apoſtles, there is no intimation of the ſubſiſtence of this Miracle in the Church, except in a ſingle inſtance, found in the writings of *Papias*, which *Euſebius*, who ſlightly touches it, ſeems to rank *among the other fabulous ſtories, recorded by that weak man* [1]. But here my Anſwerers flatly contradict me; "*Euſebius*, ſays Dr. *Church*, cites *Pa-*"*pias* as ſaying, that this Miracle had been "done in his time. Neither can I diſcern the

[1] p. 72.

" leaſt doubt or diſtruſt in the Hiſtorian, tho' " this Gentleman is pleaſed to ſay, *he ſeems to* " *rank it among the other fabulous ſtories, deliver-* " *ed by that weak man.* And however weak " *Papias* was, he may be a good witneſs of ſuch " a fact: no wiſdom was here required [1]." Another of them ſays, it is *plain, that* Euſebius *was not diffident about the Miracle of raiſing the dead, related by* Papias, *nor ranks it among fables* [2]. I ſhall employ a few words therefore to clear up the ſtate of this fact.

Euſebius, in the chapter of his Hiſtory here referred to, ſets forth the particular character of *Papias* and his writings, of whom he ſays; "that " he was a diligent collector of unwritten tra- " ditions, which he gathered chiefly from thoſe " Elders, who had converſed with the Apoſtles; " eſpecially from *John, the Preſbyter, and Ariſ-* " *tion:* and beſides theſe, he relates ſome other " wonderfull things on the authority of tradi- " tion; particularly a ſtory reported to him by " the daughters of *Philip, of a dead perſon, who* " *had been raiſed to life*; and another ſtory, of " *Juſtus*, ſurnamed *Barſabas*, who happened to " drink a cup of deadly poyſon, yet by the " grace of God received no harm from it. Af- " ter which, he goes on to tell us, how *Papias*, " from the ſame ſource of unwritten tradition, " had recorded ſome ſtrange parables and doc- " trines of our Lord, and ſeveral other *fabulous*

[1] Ch. p. 185. [2] p. 46.

" *tales:* eſpecially that, of *a corporeal and ſenſual* " *millennium*, in which Chriſt was to reign with " the Saints upon this earth, for a thouſand " years after the general reſurrection: which " he aſcribes to the miſtake and blunder of *Pa-* " *pias*, who groſly and litterally interpreted, " what the Apoſtles had delivered in a typical " or myſtical ſenſe. For *Papias*, ſays he, was " of *a very ſhallow underſtanding, as is evident* " *from his writings*; yet the greateſt part of the " Eccleſiaſtical Writers or Fathers, who ſuc- " ceeded him, were led by his authority into " the ſame opinion, on account of the age of " the man, as *Irenæus* in particular, as well as " every other writer, who aſſerts the like doc- " trines [1]."

Now from this account let any unprejudiced man judge, whether *Euſebius* can be thought to have laid any ſort of ſtreſs on an *hearſay-ſtory*, as it was recorded by *Papias*, concerning a perſon unknown; who had been raiſed from the dead: and whether he does not put it upon the ſame rank, with all the other *ſtrange parables and tales*, which he mentions to have been delivered by the ſame weak man, and expreſly declares to be *fabulous*, μυθικώτερα; this at leaſt is certain, and ſufficient for my purpoſe; that after the character here given, *of the little underſtanding*, and *great credulity of Papias*, no man of judgement will think his teſtimony of any weight in the preſent caſe; or venture to affirm, as Dr. *Church* has done, that *how weak ſoever he might*

[1] Euſeb. p. 339.

be,

be, he may ſtill be a good witneſs of ſuch a fact. For all that can be allowed to ſuch a character is, that he may be a *very good believer of an hear-ſay-ſtory*; but to call him *a good witneſs* of it, is abſurd, and contradictory to the common ſenſe and experience of mankind.

But before I diſmiſs this inſtance of *Papias*, I ſhall juſt remind the Doctor once more, of what the learned Mr. *Millar*, his own favourite writer, has ſaid, concerning the credit of his teſtimony, in a ſimilar caſe of a quæſtionable fact. "Tho' many of the Antients, ſays he, have "given ſome ground for this ſtory, yet it ſhows "originally onely from *Papias*, called *Biſhop of* "*Hierapolis*, as cited by *Euſebius*, for *Papias's* "books are loſt. But if they were extant; ac-"cording to the ſame *Euſebius*, the Author of "them was but *a perſon of a mean character*; *a* "*rude, ſimple, and vain man, who believed and re-*"*ported things upon common tradition, even things* "*that were* μυθωδέστερα, *liker to fables than truths.* "*He was a millenary, and introduced fabulous* "*ſtories into the Church, which a multitude of* "*writers after him licked up* [1]."

Thus we ſee, how the character of *Papias* ſtands between theſe two Authors, Mr. *Millar*, and Dr. *Church*; men of the ſame principles; of the ſame reverence for the primitive Fathers; and writers after each other's own heart. Mr. *Millar*, being led by his argument, to combat the reality of a fact, which was ſupported chief-

[1] Millar, p. 280.

ly by the teſtimony of *Papias*, frankly ſets forth the true character of the man, as it is repreſented by *Euſebius*, and ſhews him, to have been utterly void both of judgement and veracity, and unworthy therefore of any credit. Dr. *Church*, on the other hand, being engaged to defend a ſyſtem, where the teſtimony of *Papias* is of ſome little uſe to him, reſolves at all adventures to hold up his character, and howmany lies ſoever may have been told, and fables invented by him, affirms him to be a *good witneſs*, even of a fact, which, of all others is, in its own nature, the moſt ſurpr zing and incredible.

But to return to the Miracle, which we have been examining: it not onely ſtands, as we have ſhewn, upon the ſingle teſtimony of *Irenæus*, but I have ſhewn alſo, that this ſingle witneſs was of a character, on which we cannot reaſonably depend for the truth of a report ſo extraordinary. I have ſhewn him to be of ſo credulous, ſuperſtitious, and enthuſiaſtical a turn of mind, as would diſpoſe him to embrace and aſſert any fabulous tale, which tended, as he thought, in any manner, to advance the credit of the Goſpel, or to confute an Heretic. That he has actually affirmed ſeveral facts, doctrines, and traditions, as delivered down to him directly from the Apoſtles, which are allowed even by his Advocates, to be abſolutely falſe and groundleſs: all which I have confirmed by ſuch clear and undeniable inſtances, as would utterly blaſt the credit of the moſt eſteemed and eminent

nent writer now living. In ſhort, I have ſhewn him to be a ſecond *Papias*, whoſe ſcholar he was; and by whom, as *Euſebius* tells us, he was *impoſed upon, and drawn to believe, and teach thoſe ſpurious doctrines and traditions*, with which his writings abound, and which his authority continued to impoſe likewiſe upon the Fathers, who ſucceeded him.

To theſe exceptions, urged by me againſt the credibility of his teſtimony, our Champions have not attempted to give any particular anſwer: but ſince his authority muſt by all means be ſupported, or their argument would ſink at once, they affirm ſtill with one voice, that *his teſtimony is ſuperior to all exception*; and they lay it down as an indiſputable maxim; *that the poſitive evidence of a witneſs, ſo pious and ſo ſincerely devoted to the Chriſtian cauſe, muſt neceſſarily demand our belief in all Caſes, how extraordinary or incredible ſoever they may be in their own nature:* This is the general anſwer which they give to all objections of this kind; and on this maxim, as extravagant as it is, the merit of their cauſe and reaſoning is intirely grounded.

And now I cannot help flattering myſelf, that every ſenſible and unprejudiced reader will be of the ſame mind with me, with regard to the claim of this primary Miracle, as it is ſet forth by the teſtimony of *Irenæus*. For if a ſtrict and impartial examination can qualify me to form a proper judgement of it; or if I have any ability to diſtinguiſh between true and falſe; probable

bable and improbable; I may ſafely pronounce, that there is not a grain of truth in it, nor a ſingle circumſtance belonging to it, which a *Free Inquirer*, or a *Free Anſwerer*, if he was ſincere, could juſtly think probable. As to my Antagoniſts, the impotence of their attempts to confute my argument is a ſtrong confirmation of the truth of it. While they defend theſe Miracles to be true, their very defences prove them to be falſe; and while they aſſume to themſelves the title of *Free Anſwerers*, their anſwers ſhew them to be ſlaves to ſyſtems, and liſted for the perpetual defence of received and eſtabliſhed opinions, whether true or falſe. Laſtly, ſince this is a point, on which, as Dr. *Dodwell* has obſerved, *great ſtreſs ought to be laid*; I here freely ſtake the whole merit and credit of my work upon it; and if this Miracle at laſt ſhould be adjudged to be true, ſhall quit the field to my adverſaries, and own myſelf unable, to prove any of the reſt to be falſe.

The gift of tongues alſo, as well as that of raiſing the dead, ſtands upon the ſingle teſtimony of *Irenæus*, without the leaſt notice or mention of it in any ſucceeding writer through the three firſt centuries. I have offered ſeveral objections to the reality of it, ſufficient to expoſe the falſhood of that claim, which is made of it by *Irenæus*, and ſhall now conſider, what my Anſwerers have offered towards the confutation of thoſe objections. I cannot help obſerving however, in the firſt place, how ignorant they

were of the nature of this particular gift, till they had acquired ſome little inſight into it, from the peruſal of my work. Before the publication of my *Free Inquiry*, the Anſwerers of my Introductory Diſcourſe, affirm it to have been abſolutely neceſſary to the propagation of the Goſpel, and without which no ſucceſs could be expected; and urge that neceſſity as a ſure proof of its continuance after the days of the Apoſtles, and conſequently, as a confutation of my general argument. And this indeed has ever been the univerſal ſenſe of all Divines, without exception, from our Archbiſhops down to our Vicars, as oft as they had occaſion to touch upon this ſubject in their Sermons or other Diſcourſes, of which I could produce many inſtances, but ſhall content myſelf with one for the preſent.

The late Biſhop *Burnet*, ſpeaking of the Romiſh miſſions of theſe later ages, among the remote and barbarous nations, ſays; "It "is ſo ſublime a myſtery to think on God, and "his attributes and works: or to think of an- "other ſtate, and the way, that leads to it; that "till God furniſhes out a new miſſion of Apo- "ſtles, with a meaſure of thoſe extraordinary "gifts, which were poured out on the great "Pentecoſt, it is not eaſy to imagine how the "converſion of the Heathen nations ſhould be "made. And ſince the chief grounds on which "we prove the Chriſtian religion, are taken "from the prophecies of the Old Teſtament, "and their accompliſhment in the New—to

"the

" the *Barbarians*, who know nothing of this, " and have no way of informing themſelves " concerning it, all this proof can ſignify no- " thing.—So that in order to the convincing " their underſtandings—I do not ſee, how we " ſhould expect, that they ſhould yield eaſily, " unleſs there were a new power of working " Miracles, conferred on thoſe, who labor in it: " for what noiſe ſoever their Miſſionaries make " with their Miracles in thoſe remote parts, it is " plain, that theſe are all impoſtures: for the " moſt neceſſary of all Miracles for the con- " verſion of ſtrange nations being *the Gift of* " *tongues*, with which the Apoſtles were fur- " niſhed at firſt; and ſince they are all forced " to acknowledge, that this is wanting to them, " we have all poſſible reaſon to conclude, that " God would not change his method, or qualify " men to work wonders, and not give them that, " which is both the moſt ſenſible and moſt uſe- " ful of all others, towards that end, for which " he authoriſes them [1]."

This, I ſay, was the eſtabliſhed notion and character of this particular *gift of Tongues*, among all our Divines, till the publication of *the Free Inquiry*. But ſince this has taught them, that, how neceſſary ſoever this Gift might be, it was either not continued to the Church after the Days of the Apoſtles, or withdrawn at leaſt within a generation or two after, we now find our Doctors in a quite different tone, from all

[1] Biſhop Burnet's Pref. to Lactant. p. 12, 13, 14, 15.

who

who wrote before them; and as if the nature of this Miracle had been wholly changed at once, treating it, as of much leſs uſe, than any other Miracle, and aſſigning that, as the very reaſon, why it was one of the firſt, which God thought fit to recall. "It might be ſerviceable, ſays "Dr. *Dodwell*, in the propagation of the Goſ- "pel, yet was the leaſt convincing of any to "gain-ſayers—and could be no proof ante- "cedently to the unconverted. As ſoon as "this uſe of it ceaſed, or was attainable by hu- "man means, the ſupernatural gift itſelf ceaſed "alſo, and therefore ceaſed the firſt of any." "This gift, ſays Dr. *Church*, would enable "them to preach the Goſpel to people of dif- "ferent nations, but would not evince the au- "thority of their miſſion. If this be allowed, "we ſhall ſoon diſcern the reaſon, why the gift "of tongues might ceaſe before other Miracles. "When once a ſufficient number of converts "was made in any country, and inſtructed in "the nature of our religion, theſe or at leaſt the "principal part of them, were ordained, and "ſent to teach their countrymen. And as they "wanted no gift of tongues, to enable them to "do this, ſo we have no reaſon to think, that "God would continue ſuch a Miracle any "longer than was neceſſary: whereas theſe very "perſons might want and did want the aſſiſtance "of other Miracles then, not onely to confirm "the word, but to ſupport themſelves and "others, who were eminent ſufferers for the "truth.

" truth [1]." Dr. *Dodwell* had given the very ſame reaſon before him, and muſt therefore have the honor of it. " When the Apoſtles, " ſays he, and others the firſt Martyrs of Chriſti- " anity, qualified with this endowment, had " once propagated the Goſpel, and made con- " verts in many places, the natives of thoſe " places were able to carry on the deſign, and " without any Miracle were qualified to teach " their own countrymen, in the ſeveral lan- " guages, wherein they were born [2]."

Thus we ſee, how readily they can dreſs up an hypotheſis, and apply it preſently as an allowed fact, to ſupport the opinion which they are defending. They ſuppoſe, that when the firſt and gifted Preachers of the Goſpel, had made a number of Converts in any barbarous country, they immediately left the whole care and adminiſtration of it, to thoſe barbarous Converts, who, by preaching the word to their countrymen in their own native language, ſuperſeded all farther uſe of *the gift of tongues*. A mere imaginary ſcheme, without the leaſt foundation in reaſon, hiſtory, or experience! The Jewiſh converts, indeed, who were previouſly inſtructed in all the main principles, on which Chriſtianity is founded, might ſoon become maſters of the myſtery of the Goſpel, and be qualified to teach it, as it was opened and explaned to them by their own ſcriptures. But to converts of barbarous nations and ſtrange lan-

[1] Ch. p. 74. [2] Dod. p. 91.

guages,

guages, utterly unacquainted with every principle, which bore any relation either to Judaiſm or Chriſtianity, the caſe was quite different, and to acquire a competent knowledge of the Chriſtian doctrine muſt have been a work of much time and great difficulty, ſo as to be hardly attainable at all in any degree of perfection except to a very few. It is incredible therefore, that any of thoſe Barbarians, though converted to a general belief and profeſſion of faith in Chriſt, ſhould ever have been intruſted by the primitive planters of the Goſpel, with the important charge of converting the reſt of their country, by preaching it, and adminiſtring its ſacred rites and offices. Nay, experience has evinced the contrary, and ſhewn, that either no ſuch cuſtom had ever obtained, or that it was wholly fruitleſs and ineffectual from the very beginning; ſince in all the barbarous nations of the world, no footſtep has ever been diſcovered of any ſucceſſion of native Preachers, nor any remains indeed of Chriſtianity itſelf, though it is confidently affirmed to have been preached to them all. Nor have I ever read or heard, that any ſuch method has ever been practiſed, or thought to be practicable, by the Miſſionaries of theſe modern ages; for how great ſoever their harveſt may have been found, yet all the laborers in it have conſtantly been ſupplied from time to time from Chriſtian countries.

The firſt care of all modern Miſſionaries, in qualifying themſelves for a due diſcharge of their

their miſſion, is by great ſtudy and pains to acquire a competent ſkill of the language of that country, to which they are deſtined, for without this, all their labors, they know, would be vain and fruitleſs. *Francis Xavier*, called *the Apoſtle of the Indies*, as I have elſewhere obſerved, complains in one of his letters, that he found himſelf to be nothing better than a mute ſtatue among the barbarians, till he had learnt the rudiments of their tongue. This previous uſe of the language, acquired by the modern Miſſionaries, anſwers the purpoſe of the gift of tongues in the primitive Miſſionaries; and the arts and ſciences with which they are commonly well furniſhed, ſupply the place of their Miracles. For in barbarous nations, whatever excedes that degree of power or ſkill in man, which they had ever ſeen exerted before, it will have the ſame effect as a miraculous gift, in exciting admiration, and a reverence to the perſons who perform it. Yet, with all theſe qualities and endowments, managed with the utmoſt art and dexterity of Jeſuitical policy, the whole, which the Romiſh Miſſions have been able to effect in *China*, where they have long had a ſort of eſtabliſhment, under the protection and encouragement of the Court itſelf, is, to compound the matter as it were between the two religions, by forming a motley ſort of worſhip out of the rites of them both, and humoring the genius of the country, ſo as to admit their *Confucius* to a partnerſhip of honor with *Jeſus* himſelf.

But

But let us return to the ſtate of the primitive Church, in which the *gift of tongues*, according to the opinion of all Divines, has ever been held the moſt neceſſary of all others to the propagation of the Goſpel. And this ſame neceſſity of it was ſo far from having been ſuperſeded in thoſe primitive ages, that it continued in its full force through all the ſucceding ages, and appears to be as much wanted at this day, as it was in the very earlieſt days, as it is confirmed and declared by the experience of all Miſſionaries. It is ſurprizing then, that theſe two Miracles of Raiſing the dead, and of Tongues, ſo uſeful and important to the cauſe of the Goſpel, ſhould vaniſh of a ſudden and ceaſe together ſo early in the Chriſtian Church: and if one of them, as theſe Doctors contend, was withdrawn, becauſe it was no longer of any uſe; how will they account for the ceſſation of the other, which, as themſelves own, continued ſtill to be uſeful and even neceſſary for thoſe new converts among the *Barbarians* whom they talk of, and to whom the preaching of the Goſpel was committed, though they had no occaſion for the gift of tongues, yet wanted, as they tell us, the aſſiſtance of other Miracles on many accounts? And none ſurely could be more ſerviceable to them, than that *of raiſing the dead.* On the whole, then, After all the real difficulties, which are found on the one ſide, and all the evaſive ſhifts, which are offered on the other, what can we reaſonably think or ſay of theſe two Miracles,

which are ſuppoſed to have been withdrawn, as ſoon almoſt as they were clamed, but what I have already intimated of one of them, that they never ſubſiſted at all after the days of the Apoſtles, but having been raſhly clamed by *Irenæus*, or impoſed upon him by others of more craft, yet found upon trial, too difficult to be maintained, were preſently laid aſide, and ſuffered to expire with their Author?

But I have offered one particular objection to the reality of this gift of Tongues, which I take to be of the greateſt weight, as it is expreſſed by me in the following words: "It is very remarkable, that this primitive Biſhop, who aſcribes "it ſo liberally to others, appears to have been "in great want of it himſelf, for the propagation of the Goſpel in his own Dioceſe "among the *Celtæ* or *Gauls*; where, as Dr. "*Cave* interprets his words, *It was not the leaſt* "*part of his trouble, that he was forced to learn* "*the language of the country, a rude and barba-* "*rous dialect, before he could do any good upon* "*them* [1]."

To this Dr. *Dodwell* anſwers, "that I mention this objection in ſuch a manner, as betrays a conſciouſneſs, on my part, that Dr. "*Cave* had here made a miſtake, and ſaid more "for *Irenæus*, than ever he had ſaid for himſelf; yet becauſe it ſounded for my purpoſe, "I could not paſs it over [2]." And in the next page he adds; "Dr. *Middleton* did not

[1] Free Inq. p. 120. [2] Dodw. p. 88.

"chuſe

"chuſe to take this interpretation upon him-
"ſelf, but leaves it upon Dr. *Cave*, and we muſt
"place it among the *few overſights* of that ex-
"cellent writer.—But if this be *a groſs miſtake*,
"and nothing to his purpoſe, he makes an ob-
"ſervation of his own, on this head, which he
"thinks important."—Dr. *Church* anſwers alſo in the ſame ſtrain, and ſays; "Our Author aſ-
"ſerts, that *Irenæus* wanted this Miracle him-
"ſelf for the propagation of the Goſpel among
"the *Gauls*—and Dr. *Cave* indeed ſays, that
"this is plainly intimated by *Irenæus*, that he
"was forced to learn the language of the coun-
"try—but *Irenæus's* words expreſs onely, *that*
"*he was for the moſt part employed in a barbarous*
"*language* [1]."

For my own part, ſince my interpretations, how right and clear ſoever, are ſure to be ſuſpected and contradicted by all writers of the ſame zeal and genius with theſe Doctors, ſo I have always been glad, as oft as I have found it in my power, to confirm them by the teſtimony of ſome more favored Author, whoſe learning they admire, and whoſe principles and orthodoxy they reverence. This I have done in the preſent caſe, by ſheltering myſelf under the authority of Dr. *Cave*, a writer after their own hearts, and whoſe judgement is uſually deciſive with them in all caſes, and ought certainly to be ſo in this, where it appears to be unquæſtionably true. For in flat contradiction to theſe

[1] Ch. p. 262.

Doctors, I here affirm, that I was ſo far *from being conſcious of any miſtake made by Doctor* Cave, in his expoſition of *Irenæus's* words, that it then appeared, and ſtill appears to me, as certain and demonſtrable, that he has given us the true meaning of them, and the onely one indeed, which they will bear.

This ſenſe, however, though plain and obvious, is rejected by our Doctors, it does not ſuit with their ſcheme: and Doctor *Dodwell*, according to cuſtom, preſents us with the whole paſſage, and his own tranſlation of it, of which I ſhall here tranſcribe as much as relates to our purpoſe. "But you will not expect from us, "*who reſide among the* Gauls, *and are chiefly en-*"*gaged in a barbarous dialect*, any artificial com-"poſition of words, which we have not learned; "nor the force of an Orator, which we have not "aimed at," *&c.* Now the words with which alone we are concerned, and on which the quæſtion wholly turns, are theſe, ἢ περὶ βάρβαρον διάλεκτον τὸ πλεῖστον ἀσχολημένων, which Dr. *Dodwell* has rendered, *and are chiefly engaged in a barbarous dialect.* A tranſlation flat and inſipid, and carrying no diſtinct ſenſe or idea, which a reader will eaſily perceive: yet the words themſelves have a force in them, which evidently declares their proper meaning, and which I tranſlate thus; *you will not expect from me, who reſide among the* Celtæ, *and the greateſt part of whoſe leiſure is intirely employed upon a barbarous dialect, any artificial compoſition of words*, &c.

Now

Now the ſingle quæſtion ariſing from this paſſage is, *in what way could* Irenæus's *leiſure be ſo greatly occupied by this barbarous dialect?* to which Dr. *Dodwell* makes no other Anſwer but this, "If any man can find out in theſe words, "*that* Irenæus *was put to difficulties in learning the* "*language of the* Gauls, he will diſcover, what I "cannot perceive is alluded to. The words "have no reference at all to that quæſtion; and "if we were to draw inferences from them, I "think they would rather incline to the con-"trary [1]." Dr. *Church* is ſomewhat more explicit, and tells us, "that his leiſure may full "as well be underſtood to have been taken up "*in uſing, and ſpeaking, and writing a barbarous* "*language, as in learning it.* Nay, the former "ſays he, is a better excuſe, and more to his "purpoſe, than the other would have been, as "continually converſing in a rough and unpo-"liſhed language, is more apt to ſpoil the ſtyle, "than the learning it [2]."

But nothing ſurely can be more weak and frivolous, than this account of the matter. To imagine, that *Irenæus's* leiſure was taken up *by writing this barbarous dialect*, is quite ridiculous; for what can we ſuppoſe him to have written in it? Our Doctors perhaps would tell us, his Sermons; which they find a taſk of ſome trouble to themſelves: but theſe early Preachers had no ſuch cuſtom: were no ſlaves to the labor either of writing, or even compoſing them: they

[1] Dodw. p. 89. [2] Ch. p. 262.

delivered with all ſimplicity, what they conceived upon the ſpot, and poured out thoſe leſſons of piety and Chriſtianity, which they themſelves practiſed, and were deſirous to infuſe into the people. Beſides; all the works, which *Irenæus* ever wrote for the public, and which remained after his death, are declared, by all the Antients, to have been written in Greek: and the five books againſt Hereſies, his capital work, is ſtill extant in that language, which was his native tongue. So that his leiſure could not be ſo much taken up by writing the *Celtic* dialect; and much leſs could the mere uſe of ſpeaking it, or of preaching in it occaſionally to the people, engroſs ſo large a ſhare of it, as to be the occaſion of that difficulty, and continual employment to him, of which he ſeems to complain.

But here, another quæſtion naturally occurs, in which the reader, by this time, may be impatient to be ſatisfied,—that is, *by what means* Irenæus *could acquire the uſe of this barbarous dialect, which gave him ſo much trouble?* On this head our Doctors are wholly ſilent: they do not chuſe to affirm directly, that it was infuſed into him *by inſpiration*; yet that is the thing, which they propoſe to inſinuate; ſince they have not ſuggeſted the leaſt intimation of any other way. But this notion of its being the effect *of the gift of tongues* or *of inſpiration*, is abſolutely inconſiſtent with *Irenæus's* own account of it. A dialect infuſed by God could not poſſibly create any

any difficulty to him, either in learning, ſpeaking, or writing it, ſince the perfect uſe of it would be communicated at once, and it would flow from him as freely as his native tongue: much leſs can we imagine, that it would debaſe the purity of any other more valuable or uſeful language, of which he was previouſly poſſeſſed, ſince that would be a real injury to him, and while it inabled him to preach the Goſpel in one particular place, would render him leſs able to preach it with the ſame force in another.

To ſumm up this argument therefore in a few words. Since *Ireneus* expreſly declares, that the greateſt part of his leiſure was employed upon a barbarous dialect: and the word ἀχραιφνέστερον, which he here uſes, implies a leiſure particularly devoted to literary ſtudies; and ſince he intimates at the ſame time, that his continual attention to this dialect had diſqualified him in ſome degree from writing with any elegance in the Greek tongue, it is impoſſible, that he could be ſpeaking of any language inſpired into him, or of any thing elſe, but of the neceſſity which he was under of learning this rude dialect, to which he was an utter ſtranger, by his own pains and ſtudy: a taſk of much time and labor, and what would not onely create infinite trouble to him, before he could acquire a free uſe of it, but would naturally corrupt his ſtyle and manner of writing in any other language. And thus, after all the ſilly cavils and evaſive ſhifts of theſe anſwerers, Dr. *Cave*, we find, has given

us the true interpretation of this paſſage, where he tells us, *that it was not the leaſt part of* Irenæus's *trouble, that he was forced to learn the language of the* Celtæ, *a rude and barbarous dialect, before he could do any good upon them* [1].

I have dwelt the longer on this article, becauſe all my antagoniſts inſiſt, that theſe very Fathers, who atteſt the miraculous gifts of their ſeveral ages, were, above all other Chriſtians, the moſt eminently indued with them, though they themſelves make not the leaſt claim to them, but aſcribe them always, either *to the Chriſtian people* in general, or *to mean and illiterate laymen, women and boys.* For theſe Advocates of the miraculous gifts are very ſenſible, that it would go a great way towards deſtroying the general claim of them, if, while the loweſt of the Chriſtians are affirmed to have poſſeſſed them in a large meaſure, *the Martyrs, Paſtors, and Biſhops* of the Church ſhould appear to have been in want of them, even for the neceſſary diſcharge of their paſtoral functions; for which reaſon they attempt, as far as they are able, to invalidate the credit of this fact, or to elude the force of it at leaſt, by ſeveral different expedients.

Dr. *Dodwell* obſerves, how in a teſtimony, which I have cited from *Irenæus*, it is ſaid, "*that all, who were true Diſciples of Chriſt,* "*wrought Miracles in his name*; in which cha- "racter *Irenæus* himſelf, and the reſt of the

[1] Cave, p. 120.

"primitive

" primitive writers before him, muſt be inclu-
" ded; —and that there was a plain reaſon why
" they ſhould uſually lay the ſtreſs on the
" meaneſt people, as working them, not as ex-
" cluding their ſuperiors, but becauſe the men-
" tion of theſe, who were the leaſt capable of
" craft and fraud, muſt be moſt convincing to
" Gainſayers — then he adds what he calls the
" true reaſon, why the Primitive Fathers did
" not mention themſelves on this head, which
" really was, to avoid any oſtentation, and to
" do the greater honor to Chriſtianity, by
" ſhewing, that the meaneſt of the Chriſtian
" profeſſors had the ſame gifts, when they hap-
" pened to have any conteſt with the Hea-
thens [1]." Dr. *Church* alſo, according to cuſ-
tom, entertains us with the ſame ſtory, and ſays;
" that tho' ſome of theſe powers are repreſented
" as common to Chriſtians in general, yet we
" may eaſily apprehend, that they were more
" eminently vouchſafed to the Paſtors and Go-
" vernors of the Church, who were under the
" greateſt difficulty, and to whom the buſineſs
" of converting the Heathen world peculiarly
" belonged [2]." " And if God was pleaſed
" to communicate ſuch divine gifts at that time
" to any perſons for the benefit of the Church,
" he would favor theſe principal perſons with
" them. Some indeed are ſaid to have been
" imparted even to private Laymen. But 'tis
" hard to think, while theſe poſſeſſed them,

[1] Dodw. p 47, 51. [2] Ch. p. 110.

" that the Biſhops and Martyrs of the Church " ſhould be without them, and that thoſe who " ſucceded the Apoſtles, in the great work of " propagating the Goſpel, did not alſo ſucceede " them in being favored with Miracles. And " the reaſon, as he imagines, why none of theſe " venerable Saints made any pretenſion to them, " either for themſelves or the Apoſtolic Fathers " before them, was the mere Effect of their mo- " deſty and humility, and *to avoid the very ap-* " *pearance of vanity and oſtentation* [1]."

But from this ſingle paſſage, which I have been examining, all this refined reaſoning is overturned at once; for it clearly informs us, that *Irenæus*, tho' he affirms this gift of tongues to have been common in his days, and *that he had heard many ſpeaking all kinds of languages in the Church*, was himſelf ſtill deſtitute of it, tho' the Biſhop and leader of them all, and obliged with great difficulty to learn *the barbarous dialect of the* Celtæ, among whom he reſided, before he could do any good upon them, or was qualified to propagate the Goſpel in his own Dioceſe. Our Doctors however, tho' they think it neceſſary at preſent to deny this fact; yet being aware, that they may be driven at laſt to own it as true, ſeem to be providing a ſort of retreat beforehand, by changing their tone, and reducing their anſwers to a pitch more conformable to ſuch a conceſſion: for after all which they have been alledging, to prove theſe Fathers to

[1] Ch. p. 116, 117.

have

have been chiefly inſtructed with the Miraculous Powers of the Church, it is pleaſant to obſerve, with what eaſe and calmneſs Dr. *Church* ſeems prepared to give it all up again: for ſpeaking to this very point *of* Irenæus's *want of the gift of tongues*, he treats it as a thing of no importance, nor worthy of our *inquiry, whether he wanted it or not:* and *if the whole difficulty* were granted, and *Irenæus* allowed to have been deſtitute of it; *it could not amount*, he ſays, *to an objection, nor overthrow his poſitive teſtimony*, that ſuch a power was really ſubſiſting in the Church, and indulged to many other perſons, wholly obſcure and unknown [1]."

And now after an impartial review and compariſon of all, that has been alledged in this controverſy, on the one ſide or the other, I have laid before the reader the genuin ſtate of three miraculous gifts, the moſt important, and uſeful of any, which were clamed by the primitive Church. It will be needleſs therefore to trouble myſelf with the examination of any more of them; ſince the reſt, as our Doctors themſelves will allow, muſt follow the fate of theſe three, and all of them ſtand or fall together; as being all built upon the ſame foundation, and ſupported by the ſame evidence. But in the article of healing the ſick, ſince Dr. *Dodwell* ſeems to lay a ſingular ſtreſs on one particular Miracle, and the clear atteſtation which is given to it by *Tertullian*, I ſhall juſt add a word or two, which may help to illuſtrate the true nature of it.

[1] Ch. p. 263.

A PRE-

A

PREFACE

TO AN INTENDED

ANSWER

TO ALL THE

OBJECTIONS

MADE AGAINST THE

FREE INQUIRY.

PRÆFACE.

IT was eaſy to foreſee, that the publication of my *Free Inquiry* would preſently raiſe up againſt me, *as my Introductory Diſcourſe* had done before, many fierce Adverſaries, with Anſwers and Confutations of it, charging me with deſperate deſigns, and pernicious conſequences; with calumniating the Holy Fathers; miſrepreſenting their teſtimonies; and ſtraining them to ſenſes quite different from their own. For this is no more, than what I had reaſon to expect, from the very nature of my work; the purpoſe of which is, to extirpate an inveterate opinion, which has ever been held up by the authority of the Clergy, and obtains credit at this day, in every Church, and ſect of Chriſtians whatſoever.

Opinions of this kind, poſſeſſed of the public belief, and thought to be connected with the public religion, neceſſarily create many ſtrong prejudices in their favor, and many motives of different kinds, for the perpetual ſupport and defence of them; ever ready to give the alarm, againſt all free inquiry, and to excite a clamor againſt the Inquirer, from all, who had ever preached them from the pulpit, or maintained them from the preſs; all, who thought them true,

true, or found them uſeful to their eaſe, their authority, or their fortunes: whoſe reſentment on ſuch occaſions will always be more ſtrong, in proportion, as the opinions in diſpute happen to be weak and likely to be diſgraced by the trial.

It was impoſſible therefore, that my argument could be received with indifference in this inquiſitive nation, unleſs the incapacity of the author to illuſtrate and adorn it, had expoſed it to the neglect of men of taſte and politeneſs. But ſince the approbation, which it has met with, gives me reaſon to think, that I have not greatly failed in that part: and ſince the truth or at leaſt the high probability of it is loudly acknowledged by all diſintereſted readers; I do not know how to account for that virulence of zeal, with which it is oppoſed ſtill by the generality of theſe writers, but by imputing it to their prejudices, or habitual bigotry, or to ſome motive eſpecially of intereſt, which, of courſe, barrs all entrance to opinions, though ever ſo probable, if not ſtamped by an authority, which can ſweeten them with rewards.

For to what other principle can we aſcribe, that uniform and perpetual contradiction, which they give to every ſingle article of the Free Inquiry? Some of them do not ſcruple to declare, *That there is not the leaſt pretence to any ſort of evidence*; *nor ſo much as the ſhadow of an argument in the whole work*: others, though they allow one or two things perhaps *to be plauſible*, yet treat them

them preſently as bubbles, and blow them at once into air, as void of all ſolidity: nay, they turn my whole argument ſo ſtrongly againſt me, as to make it prove the very contrary, to what I propoſed to eſtabliſh by it. Inſtead of diminiſhing the credit of the Fathers, they affirm it to be *a clear vindication of their honor*; and inſtead of expoſing *their credulity, to be a proof onely of my own:* inſtead of demonſtrating *the ceſſation of the primitive miracles*, they call it *a demonſtration of their continuance*; and inſtead of *ſerving the intereſts of Proteſtantiſm, the ſtrongeſt temptation in the world to make men Papiſts:* in ſhort, they profeſs to find nothing elſe in my book, from one end of it to the other, but a ſucceſſion of *downright forgeries and falſifications.*

Now what inſtruction can we expect, in a quæſtion of this importance, from anſwerers, ſo void of candor; who, with a ſolemn air and pretext of religion, can offer ſuch an inſult to the common ſenſe of every reader? For, notwithſtanding all their confident aſſertions, it is certain, that nothing can be made more evident by any book, than theſe two points are, by the Free Inquiry: firſt, that the Facts and Teſtimonies produced in it, muſt neceſſarily *detract ſomewhat from the characters of the Fathers, and the implicit faith, which has been given to them in their reports of the primitive miracles:* ſecondly, that the general argument of it *ſtrikes at the very root of Popery*, and muſt conſequently be fatal to it,

wherever it may happen to be received in any Chriſtian country.

But let the bigoted, the intereſted, or the powerful, exert themſelves as much as they pleaſe, it is a truth confirmed to us by the experience of all ages, that all the opinions, which now reign in the world, how ſtrongly ſoever eſtabliſhed, or how antient ſoever they may be; if not grounded originally on nature, but on the conſent onely and contrivance of men, will be ſure in the end, to find the ſame fate with old buildings: which, while they acquire a ſort of veneration to themſelves from their very age, are every day gradually weakened and inſenſibly conſumed by that ſame age; till being found at laſt rotten and ruinous, they are demoliſhed, by common conſent, as unable, either to ſtand, or to be ſupported any longer. Such will be the fate of the opinion, now defended by my Antagoniſts: for the fullneſs of time ſeems to be come, or at leaſt to be nearly approaching, when we may be allowed to laugh without offence at the pious frauds of the antient Fathers, and add the ſtories of their miracles to that numerous liſt of impoſtures; to thoſe *Oracles*, *Auguries*, *Divinations*, *Magic*, *Witches*, &c. which have all floriſhed in their turns, and triumphed over the ſenſes and reaſon of men, in every age and nation of the world.

This I may now augurate, with the greater aſſurance, not onely from the conſciouſneſs of my own conviction, grounded on an impartial

inquiry into the caſe, but from the apparent weakneſs and impertinence of all the ſeveral Anſwers which have been publiſhed in contradiction to it. For though many things are urged in them with great confidence, which, to readers of little learning, may ſeem to charge me with ignorance or blunders, or even willful miſrepreſentation, all which I ſhall wipe off at once, whenever I find occaſion to touch upon them; yet there is not a ſingle argument in them all, which can reaſonably be thought to invalidate, or in any degree to weaken, the capital poſition of my book. So that, after all the violence of this attack, I find myſelf at liberty to affirm ſtill, with the ſame conviction, what I affirmed originally in my Title-page; *That we have no ſufficient reaſon to believe, upon the authority of the Primitive Fathers, that any miraculous powers were continued to the Church, after the days of the Apoſtles.*

Such an affirmation indeed from me, may juſtly be thought exceptionable; who am too much intereſted in the quæſtion, to be conſidered as an equal Judge in it: but beſides the confirmation, which it has received from the general voice of my readers, the public has ſeen a proof of it, ſuperior to all exception, from the generous labors of two or three Clergymen, who, after a ſtrict examination of the merits of each cauſe, have taken the pains to ſhew, by a ſtrong and maſterly force of reaſoning, that the

argument, both of *the Introductory Diſcourſe*, and of *the Free Inquiry*, remains unhurt and unſhaken, by all the ſtudied cavils and ſubtil objections, which the moſt expert and zealous of my Adverſaries have been able to alledge againſt it.

The perſons, whom I mean, are utter ſtrangers to me; and cannot be ſuppoſed therefore to have written out of any partial or perſonal regard to me; nor from any other motive indeed, but a ſincere love of truth; ſince nothing elſe could have force enough to engage Clergymen in the defence of an opinion, openly decried and diſgraced by thoſe ſuperiors through whoſe hands the rewards and honors of their profeſſion are chiefly diſtributed. For though the cauſe of the Free Inquiry, be the cauſe of Proteſtantiſm itſelf, and what, above all things, tends to unite its divided ſects, and to ſtrengthen its common intereſts; yet, by a ſort of policy not eaſy to be accounted for, the inſinuations of a few peeviſh, narrow-minded, bigoted Churchmen, have had weight enough to render it ſuſpected and odious to the leaders of this free and proteſtant State.

It is not my deſign, in the preſent work, to enter into a minute diſcuſſion of the objections which may be found in all, or in any, indeed, of the ſeveral anſwers to my Free Inquiry, but to ſelect ſuch onely as ſeem to be worthy of any notice, or to carry any weight with them: and ſince

ſince the two Doctors, *Dodwell* and *Church*, appear to be the moſt applauded and relied upon by all, who profeſs any zeal for the cauſe which they defend, it ſhall be my chief buſineſs, to examine the merit of their performances, not omitting, at the ſame time, to pay due reſpect to the reſt, wherever I find them applying either the ſame argument with any new force, or a different one, which may afford any opportunity either of inſtruction or entertainment to the reader.

But before I deſcend to the examination of theſe particulars, it may be of uſe towards illuſtrating the general quæſtion, to premiſe a few obſervations on the preſent ſtate of it, and to conſider, how it now ſtands, after the correction, which it has received from the hands of theſe Inquiſitors.

1. One of the objections, which I at firſt propoſed to the reality of the Primitive Miracles, was this; that none of our writers, who maintained the continuance of them beyond the days of the Apoſtles, had ever been able to ſettle the bounds between true and falſe miracles, or to mark out, by any probable rule, the exact time when the true ceaſed, and the falſe began. So that a ſerious Inquirer into primitive antiquity muſt ever be perplexed with this doubt, that the pious reverence, which he comes diſpoſed to pay to the ſuppoſed interpoſition of God, in this or that pretended inſtance of it, may be nothing

elſe but the effect of credulity and ſuperſtition, and a criminal compliance with the frauds and fictions of men.

My Antagoniſts are very ſenſible of this difficulty; and have all, in their turns, attempted to give ſome ſolution of it: but the vanity of their attempts, inſtead of removing, has confirmed it onely the more, and ſhewn it to be inexplicable. For example; Mr. *Jackſon*, who appeared the firſt, aſſerts the continuance of the miraculous powers no farther than to the time of *Origen*; by which he intimates his ſuſpicion, of one half at leaſt of the third Century. The ſecond, an Anonymous Letter-writer, defends the ſubſiſtence of them, to the end of that century. Yet, even before that time, while he ſuppoſes the Church to be guided and guarded ſtill by all its miraculous powers, he declares it to have been greatly degenerated from its original purity. Dr. *Church* confines his defence alſo to the three firſt centuries; not meddling with any miracles of a later date; nor yet determining, as he ſays, *on the one ſide or the other, either for their truth or their falſehood*; but ſuppoſing, that among *the many fabulous accounts of the ſucceding ages, there might be a mixture ſtill of ſome which were genuin.* Dr. *Dodwell* conſiders the three firſt Centuries in general, as the proper period of true miracles, yet thinks it neceſſary ſtill, to take in ſome ſhare alſo of the fourth, as far as to the eſtabliſhment of Chriſtianity by the civil power; and for the reſt, contents himſelf by

by ſaying; *that many wonderful works might probably be wrought afterwards for ſome great ends.* Mr. *Whiſton* alone has ventured to launch out beyond the middle of this century; taking every thing for Goſpel, that he meets with in the Church, till *the hereſy of Athanaſius*, as he calls it, by corrupting the pure ſtream of its faith, provoked God to withdraw his gifts, and give it up to the wiles and deluſions of *Satan*. Mr. *Brooke*, the laſt, and moſt voluminous of all theſe anſwerers, after a full deliberation on what the reſt had ſeverally offered, ſeems to prefer the opinion of the firſt, in reſtraining the period of undoubted miracles *to the days of Origen:* for though he declares them to have been withdrawn *between the time of Origen and Chryſoſtom*; yet he ſignifies his ſuſpicion of all, which are later than the firſt, and affirms all to have been certainly forged, which are atteſted by the laſt of thoſe Fathers.

This difficulty then, about fixing the æra of the miraculous powers, continues ſtill in its full force, as a ſort of preſumptive argument, againſt the reality of any ſuch powers after the days of the Apoſtles. But my Antagoniſts, after all their pains, to account for it, finding it at laſt a clog upon their ſyſtem, which they are unable to remove, content themſelves by diſmiſſing it with an air of contempt, and declaring it, to be of no conſequence at all; whereas, if their hypotheſis be admitted, that true and falſe miracles were promiſcuouſly ſubſiſting in the primitive ages,

till the true happened, we know not when, nor how, to be finally withdrawn, nothing can be more certain, than that it would be of the greateſt moment to us, to be able to ſeparate the one from the other. For as true miracles muſt ever be wrought for ſome great and beneficial end, and the falſe, on the contrary, for ſome crafty and ſelfiſh ends; ſo the one would lead us of courſe to a religion worthy of God; the other into error and ſuperſtition, and a worſhip conſequently offenſive to him. But let us conſider a little the nature of this hypotheſis, which theſe Champions here maintain. They ſuppoſe, that true and falſe miracles were indiſcriminately wrought at the ſame time, and in the ſame Church, without any rule of diſcerning the one from the other, till the true ceaſed, and the falſe prevailed: and that the Church continued ever after in that ſtate, the perpetual dupe of falſe miracles, down to the time of the Reformation. But nothing ſurely can be more abſurd, than to imagine, that there ever was, or ever could be, any ſuch jumble and concurrence of true and falſe miracles in any age, or that the falſe eſpecially ſhould beat out the true, and the craft of the Devil ſuperſede the power of God. For whatever coloring they may give to their hypotheſis, and in what ſolemn words ſoever they may cloath it, that is the genuin conſequence of it. Mr. *Whiſton* indeed expreſſes it, by ſaying; *that the forgeries of Athanaſius, by their prevalence in the Church, provoked God to withdraw his miraculous*

culous powers,' and give it up to the deluſions of Satan: yet the fact is the ſame, as it is affirmed by them all, that after an indiſcriminate ſubſiſtence, or ſtruggle as it were of true and falſe miracles, through a century or two, the true inſenſibly expired and the falſe onely remained. The abſurdity of which notion, as it naturally flows from the cauſe which they defend, muſt yield a ſtrong preſumption in favor of my opinion, that, after the days of the Apoſtles, the miraculous pretenſions of the ſucceeding ages were all of the ſame kind; contrived by the craft of a few, and impoſed upon the credulity of the many.

2. The reader will remember, that when I publiſhed *the Introductory Diſcourſe*, I found our Divines, who were chiefly intruſted with the defence of our religion againſt Infidels and Heretics, frankly aſſerting the continuance of the miraculous powers, not onely to the fourth, but to the fifth and ſixth centuries, and ranking them all upon a level, with the very earlieſt after the days of the Apoſtles. My view therefore in that treatiſe, was to expoſe the extravagance of that bigotry; and give a check to the prevalence of principles, which are abſolutely fatal to the Proteſtant cauſe: and my attempt has had this clear effect, not onely of putting to ſhame and ſilence the raſhneſs of thoſe zealots, whom I then particularly attacked, but of making their ſucceſſors in the preſent cauſe, ſo cautious and ſhy as we now

ſee them, of touching even upon the fourth century. So that, if Dr. *Chapman* ſhould once more think fit, to undertake the defence of Symeon Stylites, and his miracles, upon the illuſtrious authority of the Great Theodoret; or ſhould a ſecond *Berriman* affirm the divinity of that Creed, ſaid to be delivered from heaven *by the Virgin Mary, to Gregory, the wonder-worker*; or inſiſt again on the credibility of thoſe Monkiſh tales, which are related *of Pope Gregory the Great*, they would be hiſſed off the ſtage, even by their old friends; as the advocates of a ſuperſtition, too groſs to deſerve a moment's attention. Here then we ſee one great and manifeſt advantage actually gained to the Proteſtant cauſe, by the argument of the Free Inquiry; in clearing us at once, from the greateſt part of that incumbrance which had hitherto clogged and blunted the vigor of our defence againſt Rome. For out of four ſucceſſive centuries, to which the Divines of this Proteſtant Church were roundly aſcribing all the kinds of miraculous gifts, and leading us inſenſibly into the very depths of Popery; the Free Inquiry, by the confeſſion of all its adverſaries, has now freed us from the Impoſtures of two of them; or, if we reckon to the time of *Origen*, of two and an half: and I make no doubt, but that, in the iſſue of this controverſy, it will free us in the ſame manner, from the reſt, how averſe ſoever their advocates may be, to give

give them up; and whatever clamor they may raiſe about the conſequences.

Since my Antagoniſts, who appear to have known nothing of the ſtate of the primitive miracles, but what they learnt from my book, which they now pretend to confute, have not yet learnt from it a right notion of the point in diſpute between us: The poſition, which I affirm, is this; that after the days of the Apoſtles, no miraculous powers were continued to the Church, or the particular members of it, as a ſtanding proof of the truth of the Goſpel, to which they might perpetually appeal for the conviction of the Heathens. This is what the Title of my work implies; what my whole reaſoning turns upon; and what I have often ſignified in the courſe of it, to be my preciſe meaning. Yet theſe anſwerers treat my argument, as if it abſolutely rejected every thing miraculous, whether that within the Church, by the agency of men, or any other occaſions by the immediate hand of God. That God can work miracles, whenever he thinks fit, no body, I dare ſay, will deny: but whether he has wrought any or not, ſince the days of the Apoſtles, is an inquiry which I do not meddle with; the ſingle point, which I maintain, is, *that the Primitive Church had no ſtanding power of working any.* This diſtinction was ſeen at once by thoſe writers, who have appeared in the defence of my argument; and who have juſtly reproved theſe Antagoniſts for their neglect of it, as being neceſſary

ceſſary to a right management of the controverſy, as well as obvious to every reader [1]. Yet in defiance of this public admonition, we find them ſtill declaring it, to be a mere evaſion and ſubterfuge, never intended by me at firſt, but an after-thought, contrived to elude the force of ſome objections, which were found to preſs me [2].

But though the diſtinction be juſt and clear, my view in marking it out, was not to derive any advantage from it to my cauſe, for I knew none, which it could give, but merely to ſhorten the diſpute, and prevent impertinent wranglings, on facts and inſtances, which have no relation to it: and it is certain that, if a due regard had been paid to it, it would have ſaved my anſwerers ſome trouble in ſeveral inſtances of that ſort; and eſpecially in the ſtory of *Polycarp's* martyrdom, on which they all now procede to exert their utmoſt pains and zeal, in defending the miracles, which are aſcribed to it, as if they were deciſive, and utterly ſubverſive of the main poſition of my book: whereas in truth whatever be the real character of them, may be, they are nothing to the purpoſe, as being neither wrought by any ſtanding power in the Church, nor carrying any evidence, that any ſuch power was then ſubſiſting in it.

But if theſe miracles have no relation, as I ſay, to the preſent diſpute, it is aſked, for what

[1] Toll. 29. Lett. Def. 16. [2] Ch. Pref. 8, 9.

reaſon

reaſon then did I introduce them into it? To which I anſwer, that it was for no other, than to expoſe the trifling and frivolous nature of them, and to ſhew, how fondly the Chriſtians were diſpoſed, in this very early and pious age, to give a miraculous turn to every unuſual incident, which might happen to take place, on any important and affecting occaſion. ********

SOME

SOME

CURSORY REFLECTIONS

ON THE

DISPUTE OR DISSENSION,

WHICH HAPPENED AT

ANTIOCH,

BETWEEN THE

APOSTLES PETER and PAUL:

AND

On the Variations alſo or Inconſiſtencies, which are found among the Four Evangeliſts, in their different Accounts of the ſame Facts;

IN ORDER TO DISCOVER

What Light theſe Facts afford Us, towards illuſtrating the proper Notion of Inſpiration, or that Meaſure of it eſpecially which was indulged to the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts, and how far they may be of Uſe, if rightly interpreted, towards determining the Controverſies which have been raiſed concerning the Proofs and Evidences of the Chriſtian Religion, as far at leaſt as they depend upon the Prophecies of the Old Teſtament, which are cited for that Purpoſe in the New.

PRÆFACE.

SEVERAL of theſe pieces, which compoſe this Volume, were written by me many years ago; chiefly for my own information, on the occaſion of certain controverſies, then warmly agitated, concerning *the grounds and reaſons* of the Chriſtian religion; and eſpecially on the prophecies of the Old Teſtament, which are cited in the New, and applied to the particular acts and circumſtances of our Saviour's life. For when the enemies of revelation attempted to diſcredit thoſe citations, as being neither fairly made, nor rightly applied; and our Divines, on the other hand, had nothing to offer in the defence of them, in which a man of ſenſe could reaſonably acquieſce; I was willing to try, whether, from my own examination of the caſe, I might not be able to draw out ſomething more ſatisfactory; and if no ſolution of the difficulty could be found in the citations themſelves, whether it might not be drawn from the characters of the Evangeliſts, who made and applied them—for this topic, I knew, tho' intimately connected with the quæſtion, was, what none of our common Advocates would venture to touch upon: whoſe fortunes in the Church depend, not on ſeeking out what is true, but on defending what is eſtabliſhed; and

on inventing expedients to puzzle, where they cannot confute an Adverſary. But truth, as the Antients tell us, lies buried in the deep, and cannot be diſcovered, but by ſearching things to the bottom: and when produced to the public view, ſhines always the brighteſt, after it has been poliſhed, as *Tully* ſays, by *the file of diſputation.*

As to the effect of my ſearches into the particular ſubject here intimated, it is fully explained in the following ſheets. For though the controverſies, which gave birth to them, have long ſince been at an end, yet I flatter myſelf, that they may ſtill be ſeaſonable and ſerviceable, towards checking that ſpirit of diſaffection, which, in every part of the Kingdom, is viſibly exerting itſelf, againſt the eſtabliſhed religion, by all the various arts, which Popery, Methodiſm, and Infidelity can ſupply: the growth of all which has of late years been greatly complained of by the Clergy. For as this increaſing evil is owing, partly to certain articles, publicly profeſſed and impoſed by our Church, which are juſtly liable to exception; and partly to groundleſs prejudices, and falſe notions of religion in general, conceived by the weak, and confirmed in them by the crafty; ſo it cannot poſſibly be cured by any other method, than by placing the common religion of Chriſtians on its right foundation, the Goſpel, and clearing our particular ſyſtem of it from all juſt offence, and reducing it to its original ſimplicity and conformity

with the natural law or reaſon of man; which, in all quæſtions whatſoever, is the primary guide and ultimate teſt of right and wrong, truth and falſehood, to the whole human ſpecies.

In the Heathen world, though there were always many Infidels and Heretics with regard to the eſtabliſhed religion, there were no Diſſenters from the eſtabliſhed modes of worſhip, and very little diſturbance given to the State by the intemperance of their religious conteſts: yet this was not owing to a want of zeal for the popular religion, in any order of men, for they all profeſſed the greateſt, but to a reaſonable way of thinking and acting with reſpect to it. The wiſer ſort were univerſally of opinion, that the multitude were to be deceived and allured to their duty, by fictions and fabulous tales, contrived to inſtill a ſuperſtitious reverence for the rites of their Anceſtors, and a firm belief of their divine origin. This therefore was the common principle of all the politer nations, and particularly of the antient Romans; whoſe religion ſeems, of all others, to have been the beſt calculated, to promote the general good and proſperity of the Republic [*a*]. But though they were perſuaded of the neceſſity of putting this deceit upon the populace, they thought it neceſſary at the ſame time, that the better ſort

[*a*] Hæc Pontifex (Scævola) noſſe populos non vult — expedire igitur exiſtimat, falli in religione Civitates, quod dicere etiam in libris rerum divinarum ipſe Varro non dubitat. Auguſt. de Civ. D. l. iv. c. 27.

ſhould be treated in a different manner: with which view, while they injoined a ſtrict obſervance of their country's rites, as an indiſpenſable duty on all, they made no ſcruple, to laugh at the folly of thoſe, who took them for divine, and to publiſh their free ſentiments upon them without any reſerve; that all the liberal part of their fellow-citizens might underſtand, on what ground their religion ſtood, and by being of one mind, on a ſubject ſo intereſting, might live with more eaſe to themſelves, and good will towards each other.

Thus in the writings of *Cicero*, *Varro*, and others, we ſee the moſt ſacred articles of their religion ridiculed with a freedom, which is apt to ſurprize us, till we reflect on the motives of it, and perceive, that it gave no ſcandal to men even of the ſtricteſt virtue and morality: for writings of this kind never reach to the multitude, or diſturb the courſe of the popular worſhip; being read onely by a few in compariſon, of a ſpeculative and philoſophic turn; who reap no ſmall pleaſure, to find themſelves at liberty to think freely and rationally on ſubjects, which fill the minds of the vulgar with anxious ſcruples and ſuperſtitious fears.

Now as this conduct of the Heathens procured both peace and reverence to their falſe religions, ſo it may furniſh ſome uſeful hints for our conduct, with regard to the true one: whoſe ſuperior excellence and allowed divinity

ſhould oblige us to guard it with the ſtricter care, from all mixture of human inventions. If any thing therefore of this ſort has ever been introduced into it, through the inadvertence, or political views of its guardians; or any thing inſerted, out of condeſcenſion to popular prejudices, or a regard to the public quiet, which in ſome caſes perhaps may be reaſonable; it ought however to be ſo diſtinguiſhed and explained, as to be underſtood, and treated agreeably to its nature by men of ſenſe; not arbitrarily impoſed and enforced indifferently upon all, by the fictitious pretence of a divine authority.

For if the ſtudious and inquiſitive part of the nation, who ſearch and judge of things for themſelves, were made eaſy on theſe points, and allowed to think and ſpeak of the popular doctrines of the Church, what they find agreeable to fact and the teſtimony of their ſenſes, it would be the moſt effectual means of ſilencing thoſe uncharitable diſputes and diſſenſions, which are ſo frequent among us, on ſubjects generally ſo trifling, as to be unworthy of the zeal or attention of a Chriſtian, or ſo ſubtil and abſtruſe, as to be incomprehenſible to all, and unfit therefore, to be the objects of faith to any. The arbitrary impoſition of opinions naturally creates a reluctance to the reception of them; and as in the colliſion of bodies, ſo of minds, the repelling force is equal to that, which impells: but if opinions were propoſed to the public, with a la-

titude of interpretation, which left every one at liberty, to receive them according to his own ſenſe, and to embrace them either as true, or to acquieſce in them as expedient; it would cut off both the pretence, and the inclination tō wrangle about them; and we ſhould enjoy them with the ſame eaſe, as we do the common air or water, take juſt as much of them as we pleaſe, without offence or injury to any one elſe. By this means the virtuous and the liberal would become united in affection, as well as opinion, and live not onely with more charity towards each other, but by their example and moderation, would lead the multitude alſo, by degrees, into more reaſonable notions of religious duties; ſo far at leaſt, as to prevent them from being ſeduced into any extravagance of zeal and principles, either Popiſh or Fanatical, which might create danger and diſturbance to the peace of the kingdom.

The chief argument, by which the Papiſts draw our people from us, is the authority of the Catholic Church, ſupported by a perpetual ſucceſſion of miracles, wrought in confirmation of thoſe very rites and doctrines, which are now taught and practiſed at *Rome*. In confutation of which, I have ſhewn in a former Volume, how that whole ſyſtem of worſhip, which we call Popery, and which diſtinguiſhes the religion of *Rome*, from that of Proteſtants, derived its birth from Paganiſm, and the corruption of

of the primitive ages; was grounded on craft and fraud, and has been ſupported ever ſince by falſe and fictitious miracles. All which is ſo evident, from the cleareſt teſtimonies of antiquity, that it could not fail of extirpating Popery at once, out of every country, where it now prevails, if the power and policy of particular States did not find an intereſt in maintaining, what reaſon and religion jointly reject.

The other evil of Fanatical Enthuſiaſm, which has once overturned our whole conſtitution, and is now again at work towards the ſame end, is grounded chiefly on falſe notions, infuſed into weak minds, concerning thoſe extraordinary gifts and illuminations, which were conferred upon the Apoſtles and firſt converts to Chriſtianity; and, as theſe Enthuſiaſts alſo affirm, are ſtill indulged in a large meaſure to themſelves. Which extravagance I have endeavoured likewiſe to correct, in that ſame Volume, by ſhewing, that thoſe miraculous gifts of the Goſpel, of whatever kind they were, or for whatever purpoſes given, were peculiar to the circumſtances of the Apoſtolic times, and never afterwards granted to any ſucceeding age: which ſame point I ſhall ſtill farther illuſtrate, in the preſent Volume, where I ſhall explane the nature of thoſe wonderful powers, in their original and moſt floriſhing ſtate; when they were exerciſed by the Apoſtles themſelves; which appears to be very little underſtood, or rather very much

miſtaken, by the generality of modern Divines; who, when preſſed by the Adverſaries of religion with difficulties, which they cannot readily ſolve, commonly take ſhelter under the authority of divine Inſpiration, and the neceſſity of an implicit ſubmiſſion to the teſtimony of God.

But as this way of reaſoning cannot be of any force with unbelievers, till the diſputants be firſt agreed, both in their notion of Inſpiration, and the certainty alſo of the fact, *that the Sacred writers were under the conſtant influence of it*; ſo to thoſe, who conceive either a different ſenſe of the word, or a different opinion of the thing, it is a mere *begging of the quæſtion*, and ſerves onely to weaken the evidence of our faith. My deſign therefore in this particular volume is, to correct the miſtakes which commonly prevail on this article of Inſpiration: and to inquire how far the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts appear to have been favored with it, and to have acted under the immediate direction of an infallible ſpirit. In the illuſtration of which, I have not inſiſted ſo much on the texts of Scripture, which, by refined and forced conſtructions, may frequently admit a variety of ſenſes, and leave room for endleſs wrangling, as on the facts there recorded, which ſeem deciſive and demonſtrative of the point, into which I am inquiring.

For inſtance: no man, who is converſant with the New Teſtament, has ever ſcrupled to own,

own, that before our Lord's Aſcenſion, the Apoſtles, generally ſpeaking, were in the condition of all other men, ſubject to frailty, error, and ſin. For we find them ſometimes envying and reproving one another; ignorant of their maſter's purpoſe; blundering about his words and meaning; and, out of fear, at laſt deſerting and denying him. Which facts manifeſtly prove, that during this period of their Apoſtleſhip, they were not under the perpetual guidance of the Holy Ghoſt: though, in the ſame interval, they were indued, on certain occaſions, with the miraculous power of *caſting out Devils, raiſing the dead, and curing all diſeaſes.*

After our Lord's Aſcenſion, it is allowed again by all, that they were indued with a larger portion of the ſame divine gifts; by which their faith was confirmed, their underſtandings inlightened, their power of working miracles inlarged. But the quæſtion ſtill is, how far this larger meaſure of power reached, and whether to an abſolute infallibility and freedom from error: which muſt be determined by the ſame rule, by which we formed our judgement on the other period of their miniſtry; that is, by the facts and inſtances of their behaviour, delivered to us either by themſelves or the other ſacred writers. And if under this larger effuſion of the Holy Ghoſt, we find the ſame marks of frailty upon them as before: if we find them differing from each other in points of fact, and ſometimes from themſelves

themſelves in points of doctrine; quarrelling, diſſembling, and temporizing, contrary to the truth of the Goſpel, we ſhall be obliged from the ſame premiſes to draw the ſame concluſion, that they were not under the continual direction of an unerring ſpirit, but left ſtill on ordinary occaſions to the condition of ordinary men.

This is what I have particularly ſet forth in the two following Inquiries, by the evidence of facts and inſtances, which clearly demonſtrate it, when ſtripped of the gloſſes and forced interpretations, which Commentators had faſtened upon them in favor of their ſeveral ſyſtems and prejudices. And by the ſame method I have endeavoured alſo to explane, in a particular Eſſay, the genuin ſtate of the Gift of tongues, and all the other miraculous gifts, from the original hiſtory and effects of them, as they are deſcribed in the New Teſtament: from which it appears, that they were not permanent or laſting, but temporary onely, and adapted to ſpecial occaſions, and when theſe were ſerved, ſuſpended preſently, or withdrawn from the perſons who had been endued with them.

Such was the information which I received, many years ago, from my inquiries into theſe ſubjects: which has appeared ever ſince ſo convincing to me, that I have been induced at laſt, to offer the ſame to the public; from a perſuaſion, that it may be of no ſmall ſervice to prevent, or to ſhorten at leaſt many of our diſputes;

diſputes; as well by admoniſhing the Advocates of our religion, not to build their defence of it on a foundation, that will certainly fail them, as by letting its Adverſaries alſo ſee, that though we grant them the greateſt part of what their objections ſeem to aim at, the *genuin grounds and reaſons of Chriſtianity* will yet remain firm and unſhaken.

SOME

SOME

CURSORY REFLECTIONS

ON THE

DISPUTE or DISSENSION,

WHICH HAPPENED AT

ANTIOCH,

BETWEEN THE

APOSTLES *PETER* and *PAUL.*

THE hiſtory of this diſſenſion between the two Apoſtles, St. *Peter* and St. *Paul*, is related by *Paul* himſelf, in his Epiſtle to the *Galatians*, in the following words:

CHAP. II.

11. *But when* Peter *came to* Antioch, *I withſtood him to the face, becauſe he was to be blaemd.*

12. *For before that certain men came from* James, *he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew, and ſeparated himſelf, fearing them which were of the circumciſion.*

13. *And the other Jews diſſembled likewiſe with him; inſomuch that* Barnabas *alſo was carried away with their diſſimulation.*

14. *But*

14. *But when I ſaw, that they walked not uprightly, according to the truth of the Goſpel, I ſaid unto* Peter *before them all, If thou, being a Jew, liveſt after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compelleſt thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?* &c.

This fact is not mentioned in any other part of the New Teſtament: for St. *Luke*, who wrote the *Acts of the Apoſtles*, under the immediate direction of St. *Paul*, and deſcribes the actions of this Apoſtle more largely than of all the reſt, has not given the leaſt hint of it; ſo that it is difficult to determine the time when it happened. We read indeed of great numbers converted to the faith of Chriſt at *Antioch*, by the miniſtry of *Paul* and *Barnabas*, and of very high debates ſubſiſting there, between the Jewiſh and Gentile converts, about the obſervance of the Moſaic rites [1]. But it is certain, that *Peter* was not concerned in thoſe debates; for *Barnabas*, who was now carried away by his authority into the ſame diſſimulation with him, was, at the time of thoſe other diſputes, a ſtrenuous Advocate for Chriſtian liberty, and being ſent up with *Paul* to *Jeruſalem*, to conſult the Apoſtles and Elders concerning this very quæſtion, found *Peter* there, the firſt and forwardeſt in that Council, to declare his opinion, which the reſt of them followed, *that ſince an end was now put to the difference between Jew and Gentile, they ought not to tempt God, by impoſing that yoak upon*

[1] Acts xv. 1, 2.

the

the Gentiles, which the Jews themſelves had not been able to bear [1]. And in truth, all that we read concerning *Peter*, except in this ſingle inſtance related by *Paul*, is intirely conſonant to that declaration at *Jeruſalem*, and ſhews him to have been more eminently convinced than the reſt of his brethren, of the utter abolition of the Jewiſh ceremonies. For this was ſignified to him by a particular revelation from Heaven, in conſequence of which, he was the firſt, who opened the door of faith to the Gentiles, by baptizing *Cornelius* and his family [2]: and in the Council at *Jeruſalem*, was the mover of that opinion and Apoſtolic decree, by which the Gentile converts were ſet free from the yoak of *Moſes*: yet notwithſtanding all this conviction and zeal for Chriſtian liberty, we find him temporizing ſtill for fear of the Jews, and on that account openly accuſed of hypocriſy and prevarication by St. *Paul*.

It is certain, however, that from the earlieſt ages of the Church, this ſtory has been a conſtant topic of raillery to the Sceptics and Unbelievers. *Porphyry*, the old enemy of our religion, takes occaſion from it, "to charge *Paul* "with aſſuming falſely to himſelf the merit of "facts which never really happened, in order to "extol his own character and depreſs *Peter's*, "out of envy to his more eminent virtues: or, "allowing the fact to be true, to accuſe *Paul* "of inſolence and raſhneſs, in reproving his ſu-

[1] Acts v. 7, 8. [2] Ib. x.

"perior

" perior for a compliance, of which he himſelf
" was notoriouſly guilty: or laſtly, to impute
" to both theſe great Apoſtles, a levity, incon-
" ſtancy, and weakneſs of mind, which betray-
" ed them into a conduct, unworthy of their
" ſacred character [1]."

Theſe objections were thought ſo diſhonorable to Chriſtianity, by ſome of the ancient Fathers, that many nice and ſubtil interpretations were invented to evade the force of them. One of the firſt, which was applied to this purpoſe, in thoſe primitive ages, was, the ſuppoſition of another perſon, of the name of *Cephas*, beſides the Apoſtle, one of the ſeventy Diſciples, eminent for his zeal and piety, with whom *Paul* had this diſpute. This is mentioned by *Euſebius*, on the authority of *Clemens* of *Alexandria* [2]: and it is obſerved by the Critics, that though we now find the name of *Peter* in all our preſent copies of this text, yet many of them, in the firſt ages, had *Cephas* in the place of it: for nothing could poſſibly give birth to the hypotheſis above mentioned, of a different perſon from

[1] Locum dari Porphyrio blaſphemandi, ſi aut Petrum erraſſe, aut Paulum procaciter Apoſtolorum principem confutaſſe credatur. Hieron. Comment. in Ep. ad Galat. c. ii.

Ut blaſphemantis Porphyrii impudentiam coerceret; qui Paulum & Petrum puerili dicit inter ſe pugnaſſe certamine; immo, exarſiſſe Paulum in invidiam virtutum Petri; & ea ſcripſiſſe jactanter, quæ vel non fecerit, vel ſi fecerit, procaciter fecerit, id in alio reprehendens, quod ipſe commiſerit. Hieron.

[2] Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccl. l. i. c. 12.

the

ſtle, but the name of *Cephas* in that
hich was inſerted probably for that very
f ſilencing the cavils of adverſaries [1].

Millii Edit. Nov.
not. in loc. *N.B.*
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he place, and what
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verſe preceding,
as to aſſign a rea-
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Apoſtle: and it is
alſo to fact, and
ſtory of St. *Paul's*

conduct, from which it appears, that he did actually comply on certain occaſions, and yield for a time to the prejudices of the Jews, in order to appeaſe their reſentment againſt him. [*Acts* xvi. 3. xviii. 18. xxi. 26.] So that ſeveral of the ancient Fathers preferred this reading and ſenſe of the text: but after this contrariety between the Greek and Latin copies had ſubſiſted through the ſeven firſt centuries of the Church, the authority of the Greek at laſt prevailed, as being more conſonant to the general doctrine and tenor of this Epiſtle.

Itaque aut juxta Græcos Codices eſt legendum, *quibus neque ad horam*, aut, ſi latini exemplaris fides alicui placet, —ſecundum ſuperiorem ſenſum accipere debemus, ut ad horam ceſſio, &c. Hieron. Comment. ad loc.

Rationibus certe iſtiuſmodi ductos puto, qui primi, jam inde ab ipſis Chriſtianiſmi primordiis, textum hunc corrupere, &c. Vid. Millii Edit. & Not. in loc.

But the ſuppoſition of another *Cephas*, diſtinct from the Apoſtle, of whom there was no mention in the Goſpel, nor any authentic account in hiſtory, was an argument too precarious to ſatisfy men of judgement: for which reaſon we find it diſclamed by ſome of the primitive Fathers. "We know no other *Cephas*, ſays *Jerom*, "but him, who, in the Goſpel and the Epiſtles, "is ſometimes called *Cephas* and ſometimes "*Peter*: both which names, the one *Greek*, the "other *Hebrew* or *Syriac*, are of the ſame im-"port. And if on the account of *Porphyry's* "blaſphemy, and leſt *Peter* ſhould be thought "to have erred, we muſt preſently feign an-"other *Cephas*, we ſhall have work enough upon "our hands, in expunging numberleſs places of "the holy Scriptures, which he finds fault with, "becauſe he does not underſtand [1]."

St. Chryſoſtom ſhews likewiſe, from the circumſtances of the fact itſelf, that it muſt have been the Apoſtle *Peter*, who was concerned in it; becauſe no other perſon could have had authority enough, to draw the *Jews* and *Barnabas* alſo into his party [2]. Let us inquire then what were the ſentiments of theſe Fathers on this ſtory, and in what manner they interpreted it, ſo as to elude the calumnies of *Porphyry*.

[1] Quibus reſpondendum; alterius, neſcio cujus, Cephæ neſcire nos nomen, niſi ejus, qui in Evangelio, & in aliis Pauli Epiſtolis, & in hac quoque ipſa, modo *Cephas*, modo *Petrus* ſcribitur, &c. Hieron. ib.

[2] Homil. Oper. Tom. iii. p. 363. Edit. Benedict.

Chryſoſtom,

Chryſoſtom, who makes it the ſubject of a Homily, preached by him in that very City, where it was tranſacted, takes great pains to ſhew, "that this ſeeming quarrel between the two "Apoſtles, was wholly feigned and diſſembled, "and had been concerted beforehand between "them with great art and prudence, for the "ſake of the converted Jews. For *Peter* know-"ing, that he ſhould give much ſcandal to "thoſe, who came from *Jeruſalem*, as being "more zealous and ſtiff in their prejudices than "the Provincial Jews, if he ſhould bluntly re-"quire them, to quit the whole obſervance of "their ceremonies, and live in common with "the Gentiles, choſe rather to comply with "them for a while, for the ſake of inſinuating "himſelf the more effectually into their favor "and eſteem: but that he might draw them "and himſelf too the ſooner out of a compli-"ance, which he really condemned, he begged "of *Paul*, to expoſtulate with him for it very "ſharply in public, that from his ſilence and "patience under ſuch a reproof, the Jews might "infer a tacit acknowlegement of his error, and "by obſerving, that he had nothing to ſay, in "defence of their conduct, might be convinced, "that it was not right, and ſo be induced to "change it."

This plot then having had its effect in *Antioch*, St. *Paul*, according to *Chryſoſtom*, applies it here again to the benefit of the *Galatians*, and with the ſame view, with which he had before

been an actor in it, he now gives a relation of it in writing; "diſſembling ſtill the real ſtate of "it, that the *Galatians* perceiving how ſeverely "*Peter* himſelf had been reproved, for his com- "pliance with the ceremonies of the law, might "be the more confirmed and reſolute in the re- "jection of them [1]."

Jerom's opinion of this affair is much the ſame with *Chryſoſtom's*; "that this quarrel was but a "fiction contrived privately between the two "Apoſtles, for the benefit of their new con- "verts. *Peter's* commiſſion was more parti- "cularly directed to the Jews, *Paul's* to the "Gentiles: And though both of them were "equally concerned and zealous to promote the "common cauſe of the Goſpel, yet each was "more ſpecially obliged, to ſecure the ſalvation "of thoſe, who were ſpecially committed to his "care. Wherefore, as there were great jea- "louſies and conteſts between the two factions "of the Jewiſh and Gentile converts, about the "obſervance of the Moſaic rites, ſo it was con- "certed by the Apoſtles, that *Peter*, in order to "keep the Jews united to himſelf and to the "faith of Chriſt, ſhould outwardly declare him- "ſelf on their ſide, and pretend a zeal for their "principles: and leſt the Gentiles on the other "hand, ſhould be drawn by his authority to "imitate his conduct, *Paul* was to oppoſe him "warmly in public, for the ſake of keeping his "party likewiſe intire, and preſerving his credit

[1] Homil. Oper. Tom. iii. p. 363. Edit. Benedict.

"with

" with them; ſo that, by their mutual diſſimu-
" lation, both ſides might in the end be ſav-
" ed [1]. This he illuſtrates by the example of
" the Lawyers, who ſeem often to ſcold and
" quarrel with each other, when they mean no-
" thing more, than to deceive the by-ſtanders,
" and gain the greater credit with their Clients,
" by an affected zeal for the cauſe, which they
" have undertaken to defend [2]. If any one
" thinks, ſays he, that *Paul* did really withſtand
" *Peter*, and out of zeal for the truth of the Goſ-
" pel, did boldly inſult his ſuperior, he will not
" be able to account for *Paul's* conduct, when
" to the Jews he became a Jew, that he might
" gain the Jews; who muſt be condemned of
" the ſame hypocriſy, when he ſhaved his head
" at *Cenchrea*, and paid his vow on that occaſion
" in the Temple, and circumciſed *Timothy*, the
" Son of a Gentile, *&c.*—and with what face
" could he have the aſſurance, to condemn
" that in *Peter*, the Apoſtle of the Jews, which
" he himſelf was guilty of, though the Apoſtle
" of the Gentiles [3]?" Such were the ſenti-

[1] Sed, ut ante diximus, reſtitit ſecundum faciem publicam Petro: ut hypocriſis obſervandæ legis, quæ nocebat eis, qui ex Gentibus crediderant, correptionis hypocriſi emendaretur, & uterque populus ſalvus fieret, &c.—Unde & Paulus eadem arte, qua ille ſimulabat, ei reſtitit in faciem, &c. Hieron. Comm. in loc.

[2] Ut omiſſis ſæpe negotiis, in proprias contumelias verterentur, & joculari ſe invicem dente morderent, &c. Ibid.

[3] Si putat aliquis vere Paulum Petro reſtitiſſe, & pro veritate Evangelii intre-

ments of *St. Jerom*, which he explanes at large in his commentary on the Epiſtle to *the Galatians:* but this ſolution of the matter was greatly cenſured by *St. Auſtin*, and gave occaſion to an Epiſtolary controverſy upon it, between theſe two great Doctors of the primitive Church.

St. Auſtin charges it "with being nothing elſe, "but a defence of uſeful and ſeaſonable lying: "and inſiſts, that if *Paul* knew *Peter* to be in- "nocent, at the ſame time when he declared "him to be blameable, and not to act accord- "ing to the truth of the Goſpel, it was in rea- "lity a lie: which it is impious to charge upon "an Apoſtle; and eſpecially in an Epiſtle, "where he calls God to witneſs, that he does "not lie. He ſhews alſo the pernicious con- "ſequence of ſuch a doctrine, and that it would "deſtroy the authority of the Scripture itſelf, "by making it impoſſible to diſtinguiſh, be- "tween its real and diſſembled meaning: for "the prevention of which evil, he exhorts "*Jerom* to a recantation. As for his own part, "he allows *Peter* to have been blameable, yet "not for continuing with his countrymen, to "obſerve the traditions of their Anceſtors; "which he might have done both innocently

pide injuriam feciſſe Præceſſori; non ei ſtabit illud, quod & ipſe Paulus, Judæis Judæus factus eſt, ut Judæos lucrifaceret, & ejuſdem ſimulationis tenebitur reus, &c.—qua auctoritate, qua fronte audet hoc in Petro reprehendere, qui Circumciſionis Apoſtolus erat, quod ipſe, Apoſtolus Gentium, arguitur commiſiſſe. Hieron. Comm. in loc.

"and

" and conſiſtently, but for obliging the Gen-
" tiles to obſerve them alſo in the ſame man-
" ner [1]."

Jerom, on the contrary, perſiſted in his opinion, which he confirmed by many arguments, as well as the teſtimonies of all the beſt Interpreters before him; " challenging *Auſtin*, to " produce any one good author of a contrary " ſentiment; and declaring, that it would have " been the greateſt impudence and audaciouſ-" neſs in *Paul*, to reprove *Peter* ſo ſmartly for " practices, of which he himſelf, was more " eminently guilty. And as for *Auſtin's* opi-" nion, concerning the expediency of obſerving " the rites of the Law, he treats it as a mere " Hereſy, and the ſame, for which *Cerinthus* and " *Ebion* had been condemned by the Church[2]."

[1] Patrocinium mendacii ſuſceptum eſſe, vel a te tali viro, vel a quopiam, ſi alius iſta ſcripſit; fateor non mediocriter doleo, &c. Epiſt. Auguſt. ad Hieron. Oper. Hieron. T. iv. par. ii. Ep. lxv, p. 602.

Arripe, obſecro te, ingenuam & vere Chriſtianam ſeveritatem, & παλινῳδίαν, ut dicitur, cane. Ibid. Ep. lxvii. p. 606.

Quapropter non ideo Petrum emendavit, quod paternas traditiones obſervaret, quod ſi facere vellet nec mendaciter nec incongrue faceret;—ſed quoniam gentes cogebat judaizare, &c. Ibid.

[2] Quum me erroris mei multos ſocios habere perſpexeris, tu veritatis tuæ ſaltem unum adſtipulatorem adferre debebis—Hæc eſt ſumma ſententiæ tuæ, ut poſt Evangelium Chriſti benefaciant Judæi credentes, ſi legis mandata cuſtodiant—ſi hoc verum eſt, in Cerinthi & Ebionis hæreſium delabimur. Ibid. Ep. lxxiv.

Notwithſtanding the great authority of theſe two learned Saints *Chryſoſtom* and *Jerom*, it is certain that their interpretation of this ſtory is unnatural and unkind; contrived to ſupport the vulgar hypotheſis, *that the Apoſtles could not* [illegible] which they themſelves own to have been not the real and true purpoſe of it [1]. *Auſtin* indeed comes nearer to the truth, in allowing *Peter* [illegible]: yet leſt the ſame ſhould be charged alſo on *Paul*, with the addition of [illegible], for condemning in his fellow-Apoſtle, what he himſelf practiſed otherwiſe, he has hit upon an expedient, which eaſes the blame of the one, and clears the other from any ſhare of it, by alledging; that *Peter's* fault did not lie in his compliance with the Jewiſh rites, but in *enjoying the ſame alſo upon the Gentiles* [2]. An interpretation, neither agreeable to the particular ſtile of that Epiſtle, nor to the general doctrine of the Apoſtles; which expreſly annuls all the ceremonies of the Law, not merely as uſeleſs, but as noxious to all Chriſtians whatſoever, as well of Jewiſh, as Gentile extraction: and which *Jerom* therefore treats, as nothing better than Herely.

The modern Commentators, who for the moſt part do little more than copy the Antients,

[1] Quod ſi cui ibi non placet locutus, quo nec Petrus peccaſſe, nec Paulus proficiter arguiſſe majorem offenditur. *Hieron.* in Gal. ii. *Et Chryſoſt.* T. iii. p. 361. Edit. Bened.

[2] Non quia ſervabat conſuetudinem Judæorum, ſed quia Gentibus eam volebat imponere. *Aug.* Expoſit. in Gal. ii. 11.

range

range themſelves here generally on the one ſide and the other, under *Jerom* and *Auſtin*. Some indeed take no notice at all of this paſſage; either finding nothing to ſay upon it, that pleaſed them, or fearing perhaps to give offence, by ſaying what they found to be true. *Eraſmus* obſerves, that it is a very difficult place, and had puzzled the moſt learned of the Greeks, how to explane it: and as he thought fit on this occaſion to adhere to the common hypotheſis, *that the Apoſtles, after they had once received the Holy Ghoſt could not err in points of doctrine*; ſo he follows the explication of *Chryſoſtom*, and improves ſtill upon it, by ſtraining the words of the text, as ſome other Critics have alſo done, ſo as to make them ſignify even to *the Galatians*, that the diſpute was wholly feigned and concerted between the two Apoſtles. For the words, which we rightly tranſlate; *I withſtood him to the face, becauſe he was to be blamed*; they interpret thus; *I withſtood him ſeemingly, or in outward appearance, becauſe he was blamed by ſome, who did not underſtand the reaſon of his conduct* [1]. But they do not reflect, that this forced interpretation is contrary to the whole argument of this Epiſtle, the purpoſe of which is, to move the *Galatians* by his own example,

[1] Certe locus eſt obſcurus, qui doctiſſimos Græciæ magnopere torſerit.— Sed Apoſtolos, poſt acceptum Spiritum Sanctum, erraſſe in dogmatibus fidei, mihi videtur dictu impium, &c. Eraſm. in Galat. ii. 11, 14. vid. it. Clarium. ib. ver. 11.

to

to ſtand firm in their Chriſtian liberty, againſt thoſe falſe teachers, who were attempting to impoſe the *Yoak of Moſes* upon them. If in this place therefore, as theſe interpreters contend, he meant to ſignify, that, when he withſtood *Peter* ſo warmly, he was acting onely a feigned part, that would deſtroy the force of his own reaſoning.

Grotius, though generally ſpeaking the moſt rational of the Commentators, yet in this paſſage, ſeems to have been affected with the popular prejudice, or unwilling at leaſt, out of regard to it, to declare his own ſentiments with freedom. For by mitigating the fault of *Peter*, and ſoftening the harſhneſs of *Paul's* cenſure upon him, he labors to dreſs up the whole, into the caſe onely of an amicable debate, or friendly expoſtulation, about a thing in itſelf indifferent; which, to ſay nothing of the reſt, the fourteenth verſe will by no means bear [1].

On the whole, we may obſerve; how impoſſible it is for men even of the greateſt learning and piety, to interpret Scripture with ſucceſs, when they come to it prepoſſeſſed with ſyſtems, which they are liſted as it were to defend, as neceſſary parts of the Chriſtian religion; for inſtead of ſearching candidly for the true meaning of the text, they come provided with ſenſes, which they are obliged to ingraft upon it; till by a practice and habit of wreſting the Scripture

[1] Ἀδιάφορα, hic intelligendum verbis amicis, &c. Grot. ib. ver. 11.

on

on all occaſions, they acquire a dexterity of extracting what doctrines they pleaſe out of it.

The caſe now before us affords a remarkable inſtance of it. There is not a fact in all the Scriptures, more clearly, expreſly, and intelligibly delivered than this, into which we are inquiring: and if it were found in any other book but the Bible, or told of any other perſons, but the Apoſtles, it would be underſtood at once, without the poſſibility of a miſtake, by all, even of the loweſt capacity. Yet this plain ſtory, related in a book, which above all others, is calculated for the univerſal inſtruction and benefit of mankind, has puzzled both the Greeks and the Latins of all ages, and been ſtrained and tortured by the ableſt Doctors of the Church, for the ſake of ſqueezing out of it every poſſible ſenſe, but the true one. For which no other cauſe can be aſſigned but this; that in the degeneracy of the Primitive Church, when by the policy or ſuperſtition of its leaders, new rites and doctrines were introduced, which the text of Scripture diſclamed; then reaſon and ſenſe were of courſe diſcarded, and no rule of interpreting admitted, but what tallied with the faſhionable ſyſtems, and ſerved the views of thoſe, who introduced them.

I ſhall procede therefore, without any farther regard to the prejudices and interpretations either of the antients or moderns, to ſet forth the real ſtate of this fact, as it is declared by St. *Paul*, and illuſtrated

illuſtrated by other paſſages of the New Teſtament.

It is manifeſt then in the firſt place, that *Peter*, though more particularly the Apoſtle of the Jews, was clearly convinced, that the Ceremonies of the Law were ſuperſeded and aboliſhed by the Diſpenſation of the Goſpel. For on all occaſions, we find him ſtrongly aſſerting this doctrine, and declaring, that *the Yoak of Moſes* ought not to be impoſed on the necks of Chriſtians: yet with all this conviction, it is equally manifeſt, that through fear of the Jews, he was induced, as we have ſeen above, to change his conduct, diſſemble his opinion, and join himſelf to thoſe Zealots of the Law, who required the obſervance of its rites, as neceſſary ſtill to all [1].

Paul, on the other hand, the Apoſtle of the Gentiles, and, by that character, the more engaged to vindicate their liberty, knowing *Peter's* ſentiments on this quæſtion to be really the ſame with his own, was ſo ſcandaliſed at his diſſimulation, that he could not abſtain from reproaching him very ſeverely for it in public: yet when it came afterwards to his own turn, to be alarmed with an apprehenſion of danger from the

[1] See Cave's Life of St. Peter, § viii. c. 7. it. Archbiſhop Wake on the Epiſt. of Barnabas, c. x, xi. p. 65.

Timens ergo eos ſegregabat ſe a gentibus, & ſimulate illis conſentiebat, ad imponenda Gentibus illa onera ſervitutis. Auguſt. in Galat. ii. 11.

ſame

ſame quarter, he was content to comply and diſſemble too, and in order to pacify the Jews, affected a zeal for their legal rites and obſervances, by the advice of *James*, who then preſided in the Church of *Jeruſalem* [1]. *Paul*, ſays *Chryſoſtom*, *was various both in his words and actions; at one time he complied with the ceremonies of the Law; at another he contemned them: at one time he ſacrificed and ſhaved his head; at another he denounced anathema's againſt all, who did ſo:* at one time he circumciſed, *at another rejected all circumciſion* [2].

We may obſerve, however, by the way, that the conduct of *Paul* was not ſo guarded and cautious as that of *Peter*, who ſeems to have better underſtood the true Spirit of his Countrymen, and to what extravagance their enthuſiaſtic zeal would carry them, if provoked and puſhed to extremity: he recollected that they had ſtoned *Stephen*, for declaring, *that Jeſus came to change thoſe cuſtoms, which Moſes had eſtabliſhed*, and he took care therefore, to give way to them in time, when his compliance was likely to prevent the danger, which he apprehended: whereas *Paul* had carried his zeal for Chriſtian liberty ſo far, and declared himſelf every where ſo roundly againſt the ceremonies of the law, both by preaching and writing, that when he was driven afterwards to a change of conduct, his diſſimulation proved too late, and inſtead of pacifying

[1] Acts xxi. 18. [2] Chryſoſt. Oper. T. ii. Homil. de laudib. Pauli, p. 502. Edit. Benedict.

the

the Jews, provoked them onely the more; ſo that they laid violent hands upon him in the Temple, and would certainly have deſtroyed him, if the Chief Captain had not come to his reſcue with a band of ſoldiers [1].

This is the true ſtate, of the caſe, as it may clearly be collected from ſeveral paſſages of the New Teſtament: and whatever uſe the enemies of religion can make of it, they muſt enjoy it, ſince Chriſtianity cannot be defended, either by denying or conceling the truth. Let the diſciples then of *Porphyry*, after the example of their maſter, object to us if they pleaſe, that theſe two Apoſtles, of whoſe extraordinary gifts and miracles we read ſo much, were left on many occaſions, like all other frail and fallible men, to govern themſelves by rules and maxims merely human, and were betrayed ſometimes by their paſſions, into compliances, diſhonorable to their character: for ſhould we grant them all this, it cannot be of any hurt or diſcredit to Chriſtianity, unleſs they could ſhew it to be one of its doctrines, that perſons extraordinarily illuminated and inſpired on certain occaſions, did on all occaſions ceaſe to be men: which will not be pretended in a religion, whoſe ſacred monuments, both of the Old and New Teſtament, furniſh many inſtances of the ſins and frailties of thoſe, who are there celebrated, as the principal favorites of heaven.

[1] Acts xxi. 31.

It

It may be objected ſtill farther, that, whatever notions we may entertain concerning the inſpiration of the ſacred writers, it is evident from this very caſe, that the Apoſtles and firſt Preachers were not conſtantly inſpired by the Holy Ghoſt, even in the execution of their miniſtry, and the propagation of the Goſpel, in one of the principal Cities of the Eaſt: and this too muſt neceſſarily be granted, ſince it is demonſtrably proved by the fact, into which we are inquiring: for if *Peter's* conduct was really blameable, we muſt neceſſarily allow, that he was not at that time under the guidance of an unerring Spirit; or, if it was not blameable, then *Paul's* cenſure of him was raſh and unjuſt, and could not be ſuggeſted by the ſame Spirit.

The ſame concluſion may be drawn from many other paſſages of the New Teſtament; from *Paul's* behaviour before the High Prieſt, where he was guilty of a rudeneſs and indecency, which he himſelf condemns [1]: from his ſharp contention with *Barnabas*, who had been joined in commiſſion with him by the Holy Ghoſt, and was extraordinarily inſpired by the ſame Spirit: *which could not have happened*, ſays *Eraſmus*, *without ſome fault, on the one ſide or the other*. Their quarrel was about *Mark*, ſuppoſed to be the ſame, who wrote the Goſpel; whom *Paul* looked upon as a deſertor, and would not keep company with any longer; but *Barnabas* had a different opinion of him, and choſe him

[1] Acts xxiii. 5.

for his aſſociate; upon which they parted in anger from each other [1]. *Paul* on this occaſion *was more ſevere*, ſays *Jerom*, *Barnabas more mild*; *both of them abound in their own ſenſe*; *yet the quarrel has ſomething in it of human frailty* [2].

It appears alſo, from the account of theſe diſputes in the Church of *Antioch*, that theſe ſame Apoſtles, who planted Chriſtianity in that City, had never made any pretenſion to an infallible Spirit, nor their converts, who paid the utmoſt reverence to their perſons, had ever entertained a thought of aſcribing it to them. For we find, that *Paul* and *Barnabas* had not authority enough with them, to put an end to their contentions about the exerciſe of the Jewiſh ceremonies, till they were ſent on a formal embaſſy to *Jeruſalem*, to receive the judgement of the whole aſſembly of the Apoſtles and Elders reſiding there, on the ſubject of their diſputes.

As it is certain then, from many teſtimonies of the New Teſtament, that the Apoſtles and firſt Preachers of the Goſpel were indued occaſionally with extraordinary powers and ſupernatural aſſiſtances by the Holy Ghoſt; ſo it is as certain, from other teſtimonies, that they were not perpetually aſſiſted in the ſame extraordinary manner, but frequently left, like common men,

[1] Acts xv. 12, 39. Quod fieri non potuit niſi alterutro errante. Eraſm. in loc. it. in Matt. ii. 6.

[2] Paulus ſeverior, ille clementior: uterque in ſuo ſenſu abundat: tamen diſſenſio habet aliquid humanæ fragilitatis. Hieron. Oper. T. iv. p. ii. p. 522.

to

to regulate their conduct by their own natural prudence [1].

[1] The caſe appears to have been the ſame alſo under the Jewiſh Diſpenſation; that the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit, did not perpetually reſide in thoſe, to whom they had once been communicated. For example; *Samuel*, when he was ſent to anoint a King over *Iſrael*, out of the family of *Jeſſe*, did not know the particular perſon, to whom his commiſſion was addreſſed, but, upon the ſight of *Jeſſe's* ſons, as they were produced before him, did, what all other men would naturally do; gave the preference in his own mind to him, who, by the ſuperior comelineſs of his perſon, ſeemed the beſt qualified to ſuſtain the Regal dignity; till he was convinced of his miſtake by a ſpecial revelation, and directed to *David*, whom God had deſtined to that honor. [1 *Sam.* xvi. 6.]

Thus alſo, when *David* had taken a reſolution, to build a Temple to the Lord, the Prophet *Nathan*, whom he conſulted upon it, approved the project without any heſitation, and encouraged him to execute it. But in that ſame night, he was ordered by a ſpecial revelation from God, to go back to the King, with a command to him, to deſiſt from his deſign. [2 *Sam.* vii. 3. 1 *Chron.* xxii. 8.]

Thus again, when the *Shunamite* woman addreſſed herſelf, in a paſſionate manner, to *Eliſha*, upon the death of her Son, the Prophet ſurprized at her diſtreſs, declares, *that God had hidden the matter from him*, and ſeems anxious, to know the cauſe of her great affliction. [2 *Kings* iv. 27.] Laſtly, from the tranſaction between the *two Prophets, at Bethel*, it is evident, firſt, that their divine Inſpiration or Commiſſion was limited to particular purpoſes, beyond which it had no effect: 2dly, That Prophets, though inſpired and employed by God on on ſome occaſions, yet on others, might be guilty not onely of weak but bad actions. [1 *Kings* xiii.] agreeably to which facts, *Grotius* obſerves, that the Prophetic Spirit was but ſeldom reſident in the Prophets, juſt as

We read sometimes, how the Prophets also of the Old Testament as well as the Preachers of the New, were indued with a miraculous vigor of body, far above the force of nature; so as to perform great journeys without fatigue, great fastings without hunger, and support life without the supply of its ordinary food; yet at other times, the same men were subject to all the common wants and infirmities of nature; to hunger and thirst; to pain and sickness; to age and decay. The case was the same with the faculties of their minds; whenever God thought fit to make use of their ministry, for the extraordinary purposes of his Providence, he inlarged and inlightened their understandings, and inspired them with a knowledge, incapable of error: yet at other times, left them wholly destitute of any supernatural assistance, and liable to all the effects of their natural passions. It is as extravagant therefore, and contradictory to the testimony of Scripture, to believe the prophets and Apostles to have been at all times incapable of error, because they were sometimes guided by an unerring Spirit; as to imagine, that they were always exempted from fatigue, or hunger,

God thought fit; nor were the Prophets certain, at what time they were to have it: of which we see instances, in *Nathan*, *Samuel*, *Isaiah*. [*Acts* ii. 3.] Dr. *Lightfoot* also says, that though their power was great, they could neither do nor tell all things, nor act on all occasions, but always had their bounds, and sometimes a recess of the Spirit, or a departure of it from them.

because

becauſe the effect of thoſe ſenſations was ſometimes miraculouſly ſuſpended in them.

Eraſmus, though in ſome places he ſeems diſpoſed to ſupport the vulgar hypotheſis, *that the Apoſtles could not err*; and, like all other Commentators, endeavours, by forced conſtructions, to adapt the ſenſe of Scripture to that ſyſtem; yet, in other places, where, like a true Critic, he delivers his ſentiments with freedom, he expreſly aſſerts, what I have here advanced; that the Apoſtles, on ordinary occaſions, were not different from ordinary men, but ſubject to ignorance and error; and from the caſe of this very diſſenſion between *Paul* and *Peter*, ſhews, *that they were capable of erring, even after they had received the Holy Ghoſt* [1]. The learned Mr. *Dodwell* alſo declares, "that neither the Apo-"ſtles, nor the Prophets even of the firſt order, "were perpetually inſpired, or had the miracu-"lous gifts of God at their command; and "that all things therefore, which they have ſig-"nified to us by their words or deeds, are not "to be conſidered as divine Oracles [2]. There "never was a Prophet, ſays he, except Chriſt, "who, in all his actions, was directed by a pro-

[1] Eraſm. in Act. x 38. **Etiam poſt acceptum Spiritum Sanctum, objurgatur ac docetur Petrus a Paulo: Paulus a Barnaba diſſentit uſque ad divortium.**

[2] Dixeram — ne quidem Apoſtolis, aut ſummi ordinis Prophetis fuiſſe ad nutum aut pro arbitrio ſuo, divini Numinis afflatus; nec adeo omnia, quæcunque dictis ſignificarunt aut factis, ea pro divinis oraculis habenda. Præf. in Diſſ. Iren. § ii.

" phetic Spirit; nor ever any, who was not li-
" able to human errors, where he was guided
" only by his own human Spirit. *Barnabas* er-
" red, *St. Peter* alſo erred, and *St. Paul*, an
" Apoſtle not inferior to him, affirms him to
" have erred, though they were indued with the
" Apoſtolic, or the very higheſt degree of the
" extraordinary gifts [1]."

Some zealots indeed, on the other hand, contend; that to give up the perpetual inſpiration of the ſacred writers, is to betray the cauſe of Chriſtianity, and to give up the authority of the Scriptures themſelves; and that there is a neceſſity to admit or reject the whole, as divinely inſpired; ſince partial inſpiration will be found equivalent in the end to no inſpiration at all. And this indeed is the general doctrine of thoſe, who aſſume to themſelves the title of orthodox: but it is ſo far from being of ſervice to Chriſtianity, that it has always been, and ever will be, a clog and incumbrance to it, with all rational and thinking men: (and to impoſe it, as neceſſary to the Creed of a Chriſtian, and on the authority of thoſe ſacred books, in which every

[1] Nullus, excepto Domino, fuit unquam Propheta, qui omnia egerit Spiritu prophetico. Nullus, qui in iis, quæ ſuo geſſerit humano ſpiritu, non fuerit etiam erroribus obnoxius humanis. Erravit Barnabas: Erravit etiam S. Petrus, eumque erraſſe confirmat, non minor Apoſtolus, S. Paulus, ſupremo licet extraordinariorum donorum gradu Apoſtolico præditi. Diſſ. Iren. ii. § iii. p. 95.

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one may ſee the apparent marks of human frailty, not onely in the ſtyle and language, but ſometimes alſo in the matter of them, can have no other effect, but of reducing us to the dilemma of diſtruſting either thoſe books, or our ſenſes.)

But this notion is not onely inconſiſtent with the facts abovementioned, but contradictory even to thoſe very writers, to whom it is aſcribed: for it is certain, that the Evangeliſts make not the leaſt pretenſion to it, and the Apoſtles on ſome occaſions expreſly diſclame it [1]. *St. Paul*, in this ſame Epiſtle to the *Galatians*, ſays, *I ſpeak after the manner of men.* On which *St. Jerom* obſerves, "that he makes "good what he ſays, and by his low and vul- "gar way of reaſoning, might have given of- "fence to underſtanding men, if he had not "prefaced it, as he does, by ſignifying, that he "he was delivering onely his own human ſenti- "ments [2]."

And as this Apoſtle was ſometimes deſtitute of the divine aſſiſtance, in the explication of particular doctrines, ſo it is as evident alſo, that,

[1] 1 Cor. vii. 12, 25. 2 Cor. xi. 17. Rom. iii. 5. vi. 19.

[2] Gal. iii. 15. Unde manifeſtum eſt, id feciſſe Apoſtolum, quod promiſit; nec reconditis ad Galatas uſum eſſe ſenſibus, ſed quotidianis & vilibus, & quæ poſſent, niſi præmiſiſſet *ſecundum hominem dico*, prudentibus diſplicere. Hieron. Comment. in loc. Oper. T. iv. p. 261.

on other occaſions, he was deprived of the power of working miracles.

The Apoſtles, ſays *Eraſmus*, did not *always raiſe the dead*; did not *always cure the ſick*; but then onely, when the cauſe of religion and of the Goſpel required it [1]. *St. Paul* acquaints *Timothy*, *that he had left Trophimus behind him ſick*, on his journey towards *Rome*; at a time when he moſt wanted the comfort and aſſiſtance of his friends; being deſerted, as he complains, by ſome of them, and forced to ſend others to the work of the miniſtry: and it cannot be ſuppoſed, that in ſuch a diſtreſs, and want of attendants, he would have left his diſciple and companion in that ſick ſtate, if he had been indued at that time, as we find him to have been at others, with a miraculous power of healing diſeaſes [2]. In ſhort, this notion of the univerſal inſpiration of the Apoſtles and ſacred Writers, appears to have no other foundation,

[1] Non ſemper excitabant mortuos, non ſemper ſanabant ægrotos, ſed tum demum, cum ad religionis & Evangelii negotium pertinebat. Eraſm. in Act. x. 38.

[2] 2 Tim. iv. 20. *Epaphroditus* alſo, whom *St. Paul* calls *his brother and companion in labor, and fellow-ſoldier*, is ſaid to have been dangerouſly ſick, and *nigh unto death*, to the great grief of *the Apoſtle and of the Philippians* alſo, to whom he ſent him with his Epiſtle, ſoon after his recovery. [*Philip.* ii. 25.] And in the caſe likewiſe of *Timothy*, inſtead of confirming his health by his miraculous power over all diſeaſes, we find *Paul* adviſing him onely, to drink *a little wine, inſtead of water, for the ſake of his ſtomach and frequent infirmities*, 1 Tim. v. 23.

but

it in the miſtaken ſenſe of certain texts, ſug-
ſted by the prejudices of pious men, who
eedily embrace an hypotheſis, which ſeems to
lvance the honor of religion, and furniſhes, at
e ſame time, the ſhorteſt and eaſieſt method
ſilencing all objections to it, by the infallible
thority of perſons inſpired by God. But this
me quæſtion will be more clearly and largely
uſtrated in my next inquiry.

REFLECTIONS

ON THE

Variations, or Inconſiſtencies,

Which are found among the

FOUR EVANGELISTS

In their different Accounts of the ſame Facts.

REFLECTIONS, *etc.*

THE harmony or agreement which is found in the four Goſpels, with regard to the principal tranſactions there recorded, though written by different perſons, at different times, and in different places, is juſtly celebrated by the Chriſtian writers, as a ſtrong proof of the integrity of the Evangeliſts, and of the certainty of the facts, which they deliver; and conſequently, of the truth of Chriſtianity itſelf.

Its adverſaries on the other hand, ſenſible of the force of this reaſoning, have been endeavouring in all ages to ſhake this foundation, by affirming, that there *is no ſuch harmony among the Goſpels*, as is pretended, but on the contrary, *ſuch inconſiſtencies and contradictions, as are ſufficient to blaſt* their authority [1]. But the little ſucceſs which they have met with in their attempts of this kind, ſhews, what little weight their objections are thought to have, by the ſerious and thinking part of mankind.

The Champions however of the Goſpel, not content with ſimple victory, nor ſatisfied with

[1] Quidam vel impia vanitate, vel imperita temeritate calumniis appetunt, ut eis veracis narrationis deroget fidem—hoc enim ſolent quaſi palmare vanitatis ſuæ objicere, quod ipſi Evangeliſtæ inter ſeipſos diſſentiant. — Auguſt. de Conſen. Evangeliſt. l. i. §10.

refuting

refuting the cavils of its enemies, reſolved to carry their triumphs ſtill further, and to cut off even the poſſibility of cavilling for the future, by maintaining, that the Evangeliſts were not onely conſiſtent in their accounts of all the greater events, but could not poſſibly contradict each other, even in the ſmalleſt, being all of them perpetually inſpired by a divine and unerring Spirit.

This opinion obtained in the early ages of the Church, and is aſſerted by ſeveral of the primitive Fathers [1]: in conſequence of which, many books have been written, to demonſtrate the real harmony of the Goſpels, in thoſe very paſſages, in which they have generally been thought to contradict or diſſent from each other.

My preſent purpoſe therefore is, to inquire into the ſtate of this quæſtion: and to collect, as far as I am able, what it is that a Chriſtian is bound to believe, on the one ſide or the other, from the evidence of plain facts, as they are found in the Evangeliſts themſelves: which I ſhall endeavour to explane, without prejudice or partiality, or any other view, than to diſco-

[1] Solis eis Scripturarum libris, qui jam Canonici appellantur, didici hunc timorem honoremque deferre, ut nullum eorum auctorem ſcribendo aliquid erraſſe firmiſſime credam.—Non te arbitror, ſic legi tuos libros velle, tanquam Prophetarum & Apoſtolorum: de quorum ſcriptis, quod omni errore careant, dubitare nefarium eſt. Id. Epiſt. ad Hieron. in Oper. Hieron. T. iv. par. ii. p. 630, Edit. Benedict.

ver

ver and declare what is true, and by that means to promote the real intereſt and honour of religion.

The firſt objection then, which we meet with to the veracity of the Evangeliſts, even in the primitive ages, is drawn from the two different *genealogies* of our Saviour's family, as they are ſeverally given by St. *Matthew* and St. *Luke:* which are charged with many inconſiſtencies, not onely, when compared with each other, but when conſidered ſeparately and by themſelves.

For inſtance; it is allowed by all the Commentators, both ancient and modern, that in the ſecond of thoſe Teſſeradecades, or periods of fourteen generations, into which *Matthew* has diſtributed the whole Genealogy, he has either wilfully ſuppreſſed, or negligently omitted, three ſucceſſive deſcents from father to ſon, between *Joram* and *Ozias*; viz. *Ochozias*, *Joaſh*, *Ahaziah* [1]; in contradiction to the truth of hiſtory, and to thoſe very books whence he drew the Genealogy itſelf [2]. *Jerom*, *Hilary*, and other ancient Fathers, give this reaſon for the omiſſion; that becauſe *Joram* had allied himſelf to the houſe of *Ahab*, by taking thence his wife *Athalia*, a ſecond *Jeſabel*, *Matthew* did not think his wicked iſſue, from ſo wicked a wife,

[1] Cernis ergo, quod ſecundum fidem hiſtoriæ tres Reges in medio fuerint, quos hic Evangeliſta prætermiſit. Hier. in Matt. i. Op. T. iv. p. 6.

[2] 4 Reg. iii. 8.

worthy

worthy to ſtand in the pedigree of the *Holy Jeſus*, even to the third generation [1].

But this ſolution is thought ridiculous by ſome of the beſt Expoſitors: for if thoſe three perſons had been thrown out of the Genealogy, on the account of their wickedneſs, the ſame reaſon would have excluded ſeveral others, as *Achas*, *Manaſſes*, &c. "Let the reader conſider, ſays *Eraſmus*, how it can be conſiſtent in "the Evangeliſt, to ſcruple the admiſſion of "any for their impiety, when he had given a "place to *Ruth*, *and to the wife of Uriah*, *and to* "*Rahab*, women famous for their lewdneſs [2]." And *Jerom* himſelf, though he aſſigns the impiety of the three Kings, as the reaſon of their excluſion, yet obſerves, "as a thing to be not-"ed, that no women are numbered in the Ge-"nealogy, but ſuch, as are mentioned in the "Scriptures with ſome blot upon their charac-"ters, that he who came for the ſake of Sin-"ners, and was himſelf deſcended from Sinners, "might wipe out the ſins of all [3]." Where-

[1] Sed in hoc non mendacii aut negligentiæ vitium: tres ratione ſunt præteriti, &c. Hilar. in Matt. i.

Verum quia Joram generi ſe miſcuerat impiiſſimæ Jezabel, idcirco uſque ad tertiam generationem memoria ejus tollitur, ne in ſanctæ nativitatis ordine poneretur. Hieron. ibid.

[2] Illud expendat diligens lector, qui conveniat hic Evangeliſtam offenſum fuiſſe quorundam impietate, cum ante *Ruth* poſuerit, & uxorem *Uriæ* & *Rahab*, ſcelere nobiles fœminas. In Matt. i. 17.

[3] Notandum eſt genealogia Salvatoris, nullam ſanctarum aſſumi mulierum, ſed eas, quas Scriptura reprehen-

fore it is the opinion of *Grotius*, which is intimated likewiſe by *Jerom*, that *Matthew's* ſole view, in omitting thoſe three perſons, was to reduce this diviſion of the Genealogy to the number of fourteen; with which he has reſolved to fill up each of the three periods into which he divided it [1].

It is obſerved however, at the ſame time, that in his third *Teſſeradecade*, or diviſion of the Pedigree, the number of *fourteen* cannot be made out; ſince all, who are there enumerated, make up *thirteen* onely, including *Jeſus* himſelf. To ſupply this deficiency, *Theophylact* ſays, "that the Babyloniſh captivity, with "which this third period begins, muſt be num-"bered in the place of a perſon." But *Auſtin* tells us, "that *Jechonias*, who ſtands the laſt in "the ſecond diviſion, muſt be counted over "again at the head of the third; being, in that "great revolution of the Jewiſh affairs, like a "corner-ſtone, which has two different aſpects, "and belongs to two ſides of the building: "from which he collects a myſtical ſenſe, al-"luding to the perſon of Chriſt [2]." But

dit: ut qui propter peccatores venerat, de peccatoribus naſcens, omnium peccata deleret. Hieron. in Matt. i.

[1] Quod autem perſonas quaſdam omiſerit Matthæus, factum eſt rotundandi numeri cauſa. Grot. in Matt. i. 17. it. Zeger.

Verum quia Evangeliſtæ propoſitum erat, tres Teſſeradecadas, in diverſo temporum ſtatu ponere, idcirco, &c. Hier. ib.

[2] Φασὶ τινὲς, ὅτι κὴ τὴν μετοικεσίαν, ὡς προσώπου τάξιν ἔχουσαν ἔθηκεν. Theophyl. in Matt. i.

Jerom

[illegible] of the Evangelists,
[illegible] immediately supposed,
[illegible] immediately in the pedigree,
[illegible] and the Son: the
[illegible] of the second division; the
[illegible] of the third: and that
[illegible] in two persons immediately following each other, gave occasion
[illegible] of them through the
[illegible] in the first
[illegible] whence the same omission was practised also in the latter Co-
[illegible].

It is related likewise of this Salomon, who is here said to have begotten Booz, that he really died childless, without any Successor of his own issue, agreeably to what Jeremiah had prophesied concerning him [1]. So that if this Salomon had to have been begotten of him, he must, at some time, when Luke calls the Son of Nyri; that is, his descent from David was not, as Matthew deduces it, through Salomon, but through Nathan and his posterity, as Luke deduces it [2].

Various conjectures are made by the learned, concerning the reasons which induced Matthew to divide the Genealogy into three equal periods

illud quod in angulo est his numerantur, in fine scilicet patrum ordinis, & in capite ejus defectionis, &c. Aug. de Consen. Evangel. l. ii. § 10.

[1] Hieron. ibid.

[2] Hiremiah, xxii. 30. Lightfoot, in Matt. i. 12.

[3] Grot. in Luc. iii. 27. Lightfoot, ibid.

of

of fourteen generations; ſome of them of a deep and myſtical ſenſe; but the moſt probable is, what *Grotius* has aſſigned, "that it was for the "ſake of aſſiſting the memory; with which "view, he firſt divided the whole into three "periods, diſtinguiſhed by as many remarkable "Epocha's; the firſt including the time before "the Monarchy; the ſecond, the floriſhing "ſtate of it; the third, its declenſion: and then "to each period he aſſigned an equal number of "names, as thoſe do, who artificially help the "memory by the means of images, diſpoſed "in certain places: to effect all which, he made "no ſcruple to leave out of the pedigree ſome "perſons of inferior note and merit [1]."

Dr. *Lightfoot* tells us, "that, in *Matthew's* "diviſion of the Genealogy, though the facts "and numbers do not exactly agree with the "truth, yet the Jews cannot find fault with "him, becauſe it was a common rule and prac-"tice with them, to reduce both things and "numbers, which came near to each other, to "one and the ſame denomination; of which "he gives ſeveral examples [2]." It is not improbable therefore, that *Matthew*, being a Jew, and writing to the Jews, might uſe that looſe and inaccurate method of computing, which was generally practiſed in thoſe days by the learned of that nation.

[1] Quod ut conſequeretur, parvi duxit perſonas quaſdam minime nobiles tranſilire. Grot. in Matt. i. 17. [2] Hor. Hebraic. in Matt. i. 17.

As to the Genealogy given by *Luke*, there is a wonderful confuſion in it, as *Eraſmus* ſays, with regard to the names of perſons; which in ſome copies are too few, in others too many, and in all greatly depraved and inverted. And as in *Matthew's* Genealogy, ſeveral names are omitted, and the true pedigree left incomplete; ſo in *Luke's*, many are ſuppoſed to have been added by Tranſcribers, to make it agree with certain traditions entertained about it: of which ſort, as *Grotius* endeavours to ſhew, are the names of *Matthat*, *Levi*, and *Cainan* [1]: ſo that if the names omitted by *Matthew* were inſerted, and thoſe, which have been added to *Luke*, were thrown out, it ſeems to be his opinion, as it was alſo of *Eraſmus*, that the numbers in both the Genealogies might be brought to agree very nearly with each other [2].

But if from conſidering theſe Genealogies ſeparately, we procede to compare them with each other, we ſhall find them clogged with difficulties, which no Expoſitors, either ancient or modern, have been able to ſolve. For though both of them deduce the family of *Jeſus* in a direct line from *David*, yet this line is filled up by a ſucceſſion of different perſons in each; ſo

[1] In recenſendis nominibus mira confuſio.—Eraſ. in Luc. iii. 23.

Ad eum vero numerum res reduci non poteſt niſi & Matthat, & Levi, hoc loco omittantur, ut & infra Cainaan. Grot. in Luc. ibid.

[2] Quos ſi ceteris adjeceris, comperies & numerum conſentire. Eraſm. ibid.

that

that through the whole deſcent we find but two names the ſame in the two pedigrees; and tho' in *Matthew's* deduction of it, the period from *David* to *Jeſus* contains but *twenty eight* generations, in *Luke's* it contains *forty one*.

I have already intimated, how ſome have accounted for the different number of names in each pedigree: but that ſolution will not anſwer the purpoſe, or bring them near to a parity, becauſe all which appear to have been omitted by *Matthew*, are but *four*, and all which are ſuppoſed to have been added to *Luke*, but *three*. As to the difference of the perſons themſelves, ſome Commentators labor to ſhew, that the ſame perſons are really enumerated by both the Evangeliſts, though under different names; it being the cuſtom of the Jews for each man to have ſeveral: but ſince all the names are exactly the ſame in them both, from *Abraham* to *David*, yet differ almoſt totally from *David* to *Jeſus*, this account of the matter, as *Grotius* rightly obſerves, cannot be thought reaſonable by men of judgement; nor ſo wide a difference aſcribed to the accidental effect of ſuch a cuſtom [1].

Another expedient therefore has been invented, and eſpouſed by ſome Critics of great name [2]; *viz.* that *Matthew* gives us the pe-

[1] Ex ſola τῆς πολυωνυμίας cauſa accidiſſe, non facile concedet, qui judicio valet. Grot. in Luc. iii. 23.

[2] Eraſmus, Druſius, Toinard, Spanheim, Voſſius, Janſenius, Chemnitius, Lightfoot, &c.

digree of *Joſeph*, the reputed Father, and *Luke*, of *Mary* the Mother of *Jeſus*: and though *Joſeph* be called by *Luke* the Son of *Heli*, he muſt be underſtood to mean the Son-in-law, as being the huſband of his daughter *Mary*. But this opinion, tho' approved by many of the learned, is juſtly rejected by others, as being wholly grounded on an hypotheſis, without any ſolid reaſon to ſupport it [1]: for *Luke*, without any mention of *Mary*, procedes directly and expreſly to ſet forth the genealogy of *Joſeph*: "nor was "it ever cuſtomary or known among the Jews, "to deduce the deſcent of families through the "female line [2]."

It is objected likewiſe, that though both the Evangeliſts profeſs to ſet forth the true family and pedigree of *Jeſus*, yet neither of them have really exhibited it, but have given us onely the deſcent of *Joſeph*, his reputed Father, of whoſe blood he had no ſhare or participation. To this it is anſwered, "that the family of *Mary* "the real mother of *Jeſus*, is included and re- "preſented in that of her huſband; becauſe "every man was obliged by the law of *Moſes*, "to take his wife out of his own tribe [3]."

[1] Quod quidam exiſtimant, a Matthæo recenſeri genus Joſephi, a Luca autem Mariæ, nequaquam mihi probabile videtur. Grot. in Matth. i. 16.

[2] —ἀκ ἦν νόμῳ παρὰ Ἰουδαίοις γυναικογενῶσθαι γενεάς. Theophyl. in Matt. i. it. Chryſoſt. Hom. ii.

Non eſſe conſuetudinis Scripturarum, ut mulierum in generationibus ordo texatur. Hier. in Matt. i.

[3] Nam ita fit, ut in perſona Joſephi, etiam Mariæ

But

But this likewiſe does not ſatisfy; becauſe the rule of marrying within the ſame tribe was not conſtantly obſerved; or if it had been ſo, would not prove *Mary* to have been of the ſame family; which is a quite different caſe [1]. The Commentators, therefore, have been driven to another ſhift; to ſuppoſe *Mary* to have been an Heireſs, and for that reaſon obliged to marry her neareſt of kin [2]. But this is ſuppoſed again without any foundation: for it does not appear, that there was any other obligation, even upon Heireſſes, than to marry onely within their own tribe: nor is it at all probable, that *Mary* was an Heireſs, ſince all the facts which are delivered of her plainly tend to prove the contrary.

It ſeems very evident, that the Evangeliſts had no other notion of our Lord's deſcent from *David*, than through *Joſeph*, whoſe ſon he legally was: for whenever they mention *Joſeph*, they generally ſtyle him the *Son of David*, or of *the houſe of David*; yet never aſcribe the ſame character to *Mary*: who, from the ſilence of the ſacred writers, as well as from her relation to *Elizabeth*, of the family of *Aaron* [3], is thought moſt probably to have been of a different tribe from that of her huſband.

genus comprehendatur, &c. Caſaub. in Luc. iii. 23.

[1] Quod aiunt tribules tribulibus nubere debuiſſe, neque perpetuum eſt; neque ſi fit, eo uſque valere poteſt, ut etiam ex Davidis familia Mariam fuiſſe, inde appareat. Grot. Matt. i. 16.

[2] Numb. xxxvi. 6.

[3] Matt. i. 20. Luc. i. 27. ii. 4. it. i. 5, 36.

The opinion then which ſeems to be the moſt generally received at this day, is, that both the Evangeliſts exhibit the pedigree of *Joſeph* onely, but that *Matthew* gives the ſucceſſion of his natural, *Luke* of his legal parentage. To illuſtrate this, they ſuppoſe, that *Heli* and *Jacob*, each of whom, in the ſeveral Genealogies, is called *the Father of Joſeph*, were brothers; not by the ſame Father, but by the Mother onely; and *Heli*, the elder, being married and dying without iſſue, *Jacob* took his wife, according to the law, to raiſe up ſeed to his brother, and ſo begat *Joſeph*; by nature and blood *the Son of Jacob*; by the law and right of ſucceſſion, the ſon alſo of *Heli*; who deſcended in a direct line from *Nathan*, the ſon of *David*, as *Jacob* did from *Solomon*. This account is taken from *Euſebius*, who tells us, that *Epiphanius* pretended to have received it from our Saviour's own family [1]. But *Epiphanius's* authority is much ſuſpected; and the account itſelf charged with great difficulties, and even abſurdities by the Critics [2]: and *Grotius* particularly, though he allows the diſtinction of the legal and natural deſcent of *Joſeph* to be the moſt plauſible ſolution of the diſagreement of the two Genealogies, yet, contrary to all the other interpreters, he aſſigns the deduction of the legal ſtem to

[1] Euſeb. Hiſt. Ecc. l. i. c. 7.

[2] Sed eum Scriptorem in multis rebus non tam diligentia, quam judicio & linguarum cognitione deſtitutum, labi, probatu proclive eſt. Grot. in Luc. iii. 23.

Matthew;

Matthew; and of the natural, to *Luke:* which, though he confirms by many probable, and, as he himſelf thinks, unanſwerable arguments, yet his opinion has had no better fate than the reſt above mentioned, of being refuted and rejected in its turn, by all the other Commentators [1].

Upon the whole, ſince men of the greateſt learning and experience in theſe ſtudies, have not been able to produce any thing ſatisfactory on the ſubject of theſe Genealogies, but have conſtantly exploded each other's notions, ſo that what one had eſtabliſhed as a foundation, was preſently overthrown by another, there ſeems to be no other part left to us, than, with many of the ſame Critics, to conſider the two pedigrees as inexplicable and irreconcileable, and, according to the advice of St. *Paul*, to give no heed to endleſs genealogies, which *miniſter quæſtions, rather than godly edifying, which is in faith* [2].

[1] Ego vero non conjecturis, ſed liquidis, ni fallor, rationibus adductus certiſſimum arbitror, a Matthæo ſpectari juris ſucceſſionem. Ibid.

[2] Cum hactenus tam multi, & docti, & exercitati viri ita digladiati ſint, ut quæ alius tanquam ſolidiſſima fundamenta poſuerat, alius novis rationibus illa deſtruat, &c. Vid. Clarium in Matt. i. 1.

Illud interim cavebimus, ne poſt alius etiam ex veteribus, qui naufragium non ſemel hic fecerunt, Genealogiam anxie excutiamus: contenti illo Ambroſii in Lucam, Non licet mihi ſcire generationis ſeriem, non licet tamen neſcire generationis fidem. Heinſ. Exercit. Sacr. in Matt. i.

Operam & oleum perdit, qui hic curioſe & ſuperſtitioſe diligens, &c. Scultet. Exercit. Evangel. l. i. 42. See Hammond on Matt. i.

As to the hiſtorical facts, which are recorded in the Goſpels, Interpreters have obſerved likewiſe a ſtrange diſagreement and variation in many of them, as they are ſeverally deſcribed by different Evangeliſts. For example, the ſtory of the woman who anointed our Lord, is thus told by *Matthew* and *Mark*, *that Jeſus being at Bethany, in the houſe of Simon the Leper, there came in a woman, having an Alabaſter box of rich ointment, and poured it on his head, as he ſat at meat.* *St. John*, without any mention of *Simon the Leper*, ſays, *that this paſſed at a Supper made for Jeſus, in Bethany, where Lazarus, whom he had raiſed from the dead, ſat at the table with him, whoſe Siſter Martha waited on them, while his other Siſter Mary took a pound of ointment of Spikenard very coſtly, and anointed* with it, not the head, *but the feet of Jeſus, and wiped them with her hair.* *Matthew* ſays, *that when his Diſciples ſaw it, they had indignation, ſaying; to what purpoſe is this waſte? for this ointment might have been ſold for much and given to the poor.* —— *Mark* alſo tells us, *that there were ſome, who had indignation at this waſte, and were very angry with the woman for it.* But *John* ſays, *that it was onely Judas Iſcariot*, who grumbled at it—*not that he cared for the poor, but becauſe he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein* [1].

[1] Matt. xxvi. 6. Mar. xiv. 3. Joh. xii. 1. Scio quoſdam hunc locum calumniari, quare alius Evangeliſta Judam ſolum dixerit contriſtatum, & Matthæus

This

This ſtory of the unction of *Jeſus*, by a certain woman, who had been a Sinner, as it is related by *Luke* [1], ſupplies ſo many freſh difficulties, that the Expoſitors both ancient and modern have been driven to their uſual ſhift, of ſuppoſing theſe different accounts to relate to different facts, performed at different times, and by different women. *Let no man imagine*, ſays *Jerom, that it was the ſame woman, who anointed the head, and the feet of Jeſus.* Where the Editor of his works admoniſhes us by a marginal note, that there were *many Mary's, who anointed him* [2]. *Theophylact* ſuppoſes that there were *three*; but *Auſtin*, that the ſame thing was performed *twice by the ſame woman* [3]. Yet all theſe varying accounts agree ſo remarkably with each other in every principal circumſtance, that it is abſurd and irrational, to feign ſeveral diſtinct ſtories, to ſerve the prejudices onely of thoſe, who think it impious, to allow the poſſibility of an error or miſtake in the Evangeliſts. For *Luke* affirms, with *John*, that this paſſed at an entertainment made for *Jeſus*; and with the other Two, in the houſe of a perſon called *Si-*

ſcribat omnes Apoſtolos contriſtatos; neſcientes tropum, qui dicitur συλλήψις, vel Synecdoche — Hier. in Matt. xxvi. Op. T. iv. p. 125.

[1] Luk. vii. 37.

[2] Nemo putet eandem eſſe quæ unguentum fudit ſuper caput & quæ ſuper pedes, &c. Id. ibid.

[3] Τινὲς τρεῖς λέγουσιν εἶναι, &c. Theophyl. in Matt. xxvi.

Nihil itaque aliud intelligendum, niſi non quidem aliam fuiſſe mulierem — ſed eandem Mariam bis hoc feciſſe. — Auguſt. de Conſ. Evang. l. ii. § 154.

mon.;

mon; and in the words of *Mark*, that the woman brought *an Alabaſter box of ointment*; and again, with *John*, that ſhe anointed, not the head, *but the feet of Jeſus* [1]. But what ſeems to put the caſe beyond all doubt, is; that *John*, ſpeaking in another place of this *Mary*, the ſiſter of *Lazarus*, before his mention of this fact, ſays of her, by an anticipation or *prolepſis*, not unuſual with the ſacred writers, *She who anointed the Lord, with ointment, and wiped his feet with her hair*: which deſignation of her perſon, by ſo particular a circumſtance would have been impertinent and equivocal, as *Grotius* obſerves, if there had been more facts of the ſame kind, and *more Mary's*, who anointed him [2].

There is a great difference alſo in the time, which is aſſigned to this unction by the Evangeliſts, whence the chief argument is drawn for the diverſity of the fact: for three of them declare it to have happened a few days before the death of *Jeſus*; whereas *Luke* deſcribes it, as done in the beginning of his miniſtry, and while *John Baptiſt* was living. But this will eaſily be accounted for, by alledging what the moſt ſcrupulous of the Commentators allow, that the

[1] Non tantum unam eandemque fuiſſe mulierem, ſed & factum idem, cur negetur non video: neque enim temere multiplicandæ hiſtoriæ.—Hæ circumſtantiæ ſunt ἀκριβέστεραι quam ut diverſis temporibus congruant. Grot. in Matt. xxvi. 6.

[2] Non poterat autem certa ſatis nota ſumi ex eo, quod ſæpiùs acciderat, &c. Grot. Ibid.

Evangeliſts

Evangeliſts took no care, nor thought, to diſpoſe their facts in the proper order of time, in which they were tranſacted, but ſet them down, juſt as their memory ſupplied them; and what they had forgotten in its proper place, related in another, as they happened to recollect it; and that *Luke* in particular was leſs accurate in this article than any of them, as he compiled his hiſtory, not from his own knowledge or experience, but from materials received at ſecond hand from others. Wherefore ſince in the caſe of this ſame ſtory, as it is ſeparately related by three of the *Evangeliſts*, we confeſſedly ſee ſeveral variations or ſeeming inconſiſtencies; what ſcruple or danger can there be, in admitting a few more, from the relation of a fourth, who, in his account of facts, which are common to them all, is obſerved, for the reaſon juſt mentioned, to be more confuſed and inaccurate than any of them [1].

After the ſtory juſt mentioned, there follows

[1] Nihil certius, quam a Scriptoribus Evangeliorum multa referri, non temporis ordine ſed rerum ductu. Grot. in Matt. xxvi. 6.

Matthæus non ordine quo geſtum eſt, ſed quo prætermiſſum recolit, &c. Auguſt. de Conſ. Evang. l. ii. § 53.

Marcus ea juxta fidem magis geſtorum narravit, quam ordinem. Hieron. Prol. in Matt.

None of them agree throughout in obſerving the order and ſucceſſion of the actions related, &c. Hammond Prol. in Matt. p. 4.

Luke who wrote his ſtory from collections he had from others, hath not ſo exactly obſerved the order, and hath varied from the others in words and circumſtances, &c. Ibid.

another

another in the ſame chapter, of our Lord's foretelling to his Diſciples the treachery of *Judas*, which is related alſo variouſly by the Evangeliſts. For his Apoſtles, as they ſat at table with him, being grieved to hear him declare, that one of their number ſhould prove ſo vile a traitor, were very deſirous, for their own juſtification, that the perſon might be named, and *began every one to ſay, Lord, is it I?* Whereupon *Jeſus* gave them a ſign or token, by which they might diſtinguiſh him, ſaying; *He, who dippeth his hand with me in the diſh, the ſame ſhall betray me.* This account is given by *Matthew* and *Mark*; but *John* gives a very different turn to it: *That Peter beckened to John, who was leaning on Jeſus's boſom, to aſk, who it ſhould be: and John having put the quæſtion, Jeſus anſwered; He it is, to whom I ſhall give a ſop, when I have dipped it: and when he had dipped the ſop, he gave it to Judas* [1].

The difference is of no conſequence, and might ſafely be imputed to want of accuracy or memory, in recollecting and recording minute circumſtances: but ſuch an imputation is generally thought ſo diſhonourable to the Evangeliſts, that it is pleaſant to ſee, what ſhifts have been contrived to evade it. We are told then, that this deſignation of the traitor *Judas, by the delivery of a ſop to him*, was not ſignified by *Jeſus* in common to all his Apoſtles, but to *John* onely in private, then lying upon his boſom; who

[1] Matt. xxvi. 23. Mar. xiv. 20. Joh. xiii. 26.

had

had *whiſpered the quæſtion* to his Maſter, and was anſwered alſo *by a whiſper*, which was not explained to the reſt; who knew therefore nothing more of the matter, than what is recorded by *Matthew* and *Mark* [1]. So blind is prejudice, that to refute the ſuſpicion of an error or ſlip of memory in the Evangeliſts, it does not ſcruple to charge them with ignorance of the facts, which they had undertaken to tranſmit to poſterity.

Matthew relates, that *two Dæmoniacs*, who lived furious among the tombs, in the country *of the Gadarenes*, were cured by *Jeſus*, when he permitted the ejected Devils to enter *into the herd of ſwine:* but *Mark* and *Luke* tell the ſame ſtory of *one man* onely, poſſeſſed *by a legion of Devils* [2]. *Auſtin*, accounting for this difference, ſays; "that we are to underſtand, that "one of the two Dæmoniacs mentioned by "*Matthew* was of a more diſtinguiſhed and "eminent character; for whoſe unhappy caſe "that country was chiefly concerned, and more "particularly ſollicitous for his ſafety: ſo that "the other two Evangeliſts, being deſirous to "ſignify this, thought it beſt to mention him "alone, by whoſe means the fame of this mira-

[1] Nulli diſcipulorum aperte demonſtravit, quis illum traditurus eſſet, præterquam Johanni, cui ſecrete percunctanti ſecrete reſponſum puto.—Zeger. in Matt. xxvi. 23.

Cum Johannes ſubmiſſiori voce interrogaret, Chriſtus ſubmiſſa itidem voce indicavit—quod cum non intellexiſſent reliqui Apoſtoli, &c. Lud. Cappell. in Joh. xiii. 26.

[2] Matt. viii. 28. Mar. v. 2. Luc. viii. 26.

"cle

" cle had been more widely and effectually " ſpread [1]."

Matthew informs us alſo, that *two blind men* implored the help of *Jeſus*, as he was paſſing along the road, and were cured by him of their blindneſs: but *Mark* tells the ſame fact of *one man* onely ſo cured, whoſe name he particularly mentions, *Bartimæus the ſon of Timæus:* they both, however, declare the caſe to have happened, as *Jeſus* returned from *Jericho:* but *Luke*, who agrees with *Mark*, in mentioning but *one blind man*, contradicts them both, in affirming the miracle to have been wrought, as *Jeſus was going towards Jericho* [2]. *Origen* remarks on this paſſage; " that if we believe the Evange- " liſts to have written their Goſpels under the " direction of the Holy Ghoſt, we muſt believe " at the ſame time, that three diſtinct ſtories are " here recorded; ſince circumſtances ſo contra- " dictory cannot be true of one and the ſame. " Yet thoſe, ſays he, who ſearch deeper into the " ſenſe of Scripture, will find, that it is but one " and the ſame tranſaction, delivered in different " words by them all [3]."

St. *Auſtin* thinks it a ſufficient ſolution of the difficulty, to ſuppoſe the ſame miracle to have

[1] Intelligas unum eorum fuiſſe perſonæ alicujus clarioris & famoſioris, quem regio illa maxime dolebat, & pro ejus ſalute plurimum ſatagebat, &c. De Conſ. Evang. l. ii. § 56.

[2] Matt. xx. 30. Mar. x. 46. Luc. xviii. 35.

[3] Orig. Comm. in Matt. Edit. Huet. T. i. p. 427.

been

been twice performed, on *two ſeveral blind men*; on the one, as *Jeſus went*, and on the other, *as he returned* from *Jericho* [1]. And he gives the ſame reaſon again, as in the former caſe, why *Mark* has choſen to ſpeak onely of one of them; "becauſe his ſtory was more known and famous "in that City: as it is evident, he ſays, from "the mention of the name of the man and of "his Father alſo: whom he ſuppoſes to have "been reduced from ſome floriſhing ſtate of "life, to this miſerable condition of blindneſs "and beggary: whoſe cure therefore made the "miracle as notorious as his calamity [2]." But it is ſurely more reaſonable to ſay here, what I find to have been ſaid, by a ſtrenuous advocate of the Goſpel, that theſe ſeveral accounts of the Evangeliſts *are different indeed, but not contradictory: and that* Matthew *was more accurate in this inſtance, than either* Mark *or* Luke [3]; as in the next, we ſhall find *Luke*, in his turn, more exact than the other two.

The ſtory of *the two Thieves*,, who were crucified together with *Jeſus*, is related alſo in the ſeveral Goſpels with a very remarkable difference. *Matthew* and *Mark* tell us onely in ſhort, that *both the Thieves*, as they were hang-

[1] Nihil aliud reſtat intelligere, niſi bis eſſe factum hoc miraculum, &c. Auguſt. Quæſt. Evang. l. ii. Quæſt. xlviii. 1.

[2] De Conſ. Evan. l. ii. § 125.

[3] At hæc non contraria, ſed tantum diverſa — & a Matthæo, accuratius quam a Luca, hiſtoria deſcribitur. —Cuper. arcana Atheiſm. revelat. l. ii. p. 169.

ing

ing with him on the Croſs, *inſulted and reviled Jeſus:* whereas *Luke* more particularly declares, that it was but *one of them*, who reviled him, while the other acted a contrary part, and, having rebuked his fellow-ſufferer for his inſolence, ſaid unto *Jeſus*, *Lord*, *remember me*, *when thou comeſt into thy Kingdom* [1].

The Critics again, both antient and modern, take great pains to elude the charge of a contradiction: but none have been ſo hardy, as *Cardinal Hugo*, who, as he is cited by *Eraſmus*, treats this paſſage in *Matthew*, as little better than *a lie*; *or ſuch an account, as one would expect from a man in his cups* [2]. St. *Chryſoſtom* and *Jerom*, and all the Antients, allow a ſeeming contradiction in the words, but attempt to clear the Evangeliſts of it, by ſuppoſing, "that both "the Thieves blaſphemed *Jeſus* at firſt, till one "of them, convinced by the prodigies, which "then happened, of the Sun darkened and the "earth trembling, quickly changed his note, "and, from a ſudden converſion and repentance, "implored his mercy [3]." Which ſolution,

[1] Matt. xxvii. 44. Mar. xv. 32. Luc. xxiii. 39.

[2] Hoc, inquit, videtur, falſum — ac mox, Hoc, inquit, dicitur, ut putes dictum inter pocula. Eraſm. in Mat. xxvii. 44.

[3] Non quod diſcrepent Evangelia, ſed quod primum uterque blaſphemaverit, dehinc ſole fugiente, terra commota, — unus crediderit in Jeſum, & priorem negationem ſequenti confeſſione emendaverit. — Hier. Comm. in Matt. xxvii. it. Chryſoſt. Hom. in Paralyt. T. iii. p. 30. Edit. Bened. it. Theophyl. in Matt. xxvii. it. Zeger. in Matt. ibid. & Hammond, ibid.

though

though embraced, according to cuſtom, by many of the moderns, is juſtly rejected by others, as a groundleſs and fictitious comment [1]. For what contradiction, how groſs ſoever, might not eaſily be ſolved and eluded, if ſuch a method of interpreting were allowed, which, without any authority from hiſtory, indulged a liberty of inventing and ſupplying every imaginable circumſtance, which the fact could poſſibly admit.

The ſolution therefore, which is now generally received, is this; that the Evangeliſts have uſed onely *the plural*, inſtead of *the ſingular* number, and by a common uſe of language, have ſpoken indefinitely or generally, on a ſingle or particular caſe; which they illuſtrate by other examples from the ſacred Writers. Yet this, if allowed even to be true, cannot be applicable to the caſe before us: for when *Matthew* ſays, that *the Thieves*; and *Mark*, *that they alſo, who were crucified with him reviled him*: if nothing more had been ſaid by *Luke*, than that this was done onely by one of them; the difference might poſſibly have been reconciled: but when *Luke* expreſly tell us, that of *the two Thieves* crucified, the one railed on *Jeſus*, and the other on the contrary, by a ſurprizing converſion, confeſſed his faith in him, and implored his mercy, the difference is

[1] Hæc congeſſi, nequis cum antiquis aliquot ad eam interpretationem confugiat, quæ parum probabiliter ſtatuit, Latronem, qui in Chriſto credidit, ſubito a convitiis ad eam pietatem converſum: quo commento ſublato, &c. Grot. in Matt. xxvii. 44.

too preciſe and glaring to be ſmoothed over by the uſe of a trope or figure, which ſome call an *Enallage*, others a *Syllepſis* [1].

What other method then is there left of accounting for this contrariety, but that, which the caſe itſelf naturally offers to us; that *Luke* had his account probably from ſome, who had obſerved more exactly every circumſtance of the Crucifixion, or, by ſtanding nearer to the Croſs, had heard more diſtinctly all, which was ſaid by thoſe, who were crucified? For it is highly improbable, or impoſſible rather, to imagine, that the other *Evangeliſts* would have omitted to mention a fact of ſuch moment, and one of the moſt remarkable in the New Teſtament, if it had come to their knowledge: a fact, I ſay, ſo full both of inſtruction and of comfort to all Chriſtians, both good and bad; which decides the grand quæſtion about the immediate ſtate of departed ſouls, and the entrance of the juſt into Paradiſe: ſince it is abſurd to imagine, that this Thief, after a life wholly ſpent in riot and wickedneſs, ſhould by a ſudden repentance, how ſignal or ſincere ſoever, obtain any peculiar reward, beyond what is prepared for the faithful and the righteous [2]. St. *Chryſoſtom* ſpeaking of this

[1] Sed etiam quia unus hoc fecit, potuit uſitato locutionis modo per pluralem numerum ſignificari.—Auguſt. de Conſ. Evang. l. iii. § 53. See Grot. Eraſm. and the other Critics on this text.

[2] Mihi quidem tale hoc miraculum videtur, ut illuſtrius mujuſque nullum alibi exſtare exiſtimem: nullum

very

very caſe in one of his Sermons, ſays; "Chriſt "introduced the Thief into Paradiſe, loaded "with an infinite weight of ſins. But was this "then the ſole wonder in the caſe, that he in- "troduced a Thief into Paradiſe? No, there is "another ſtill greater. For he introduced him "preferably to all the world, and to his own "Apoſtles; that no man hereafter might de- "ſpair of an admiſſion, or loſe all hopes of his "own Salvation, though he be ſpending his life "in the Courts of Kings, and charged with all "the vices, which there abound [1]."

quod afflictos peccatorum mole animos magis attollat. —Heinſ. Exercit. Sacr. in Luc. xxiii.

[1] Oper. T. iv. p. 679. C. Edit. Benedict.

N. B. St. Auſtin, having affirmed in a certain treatiſe, that Baptiſm was abſolutely neceſſary to ſalvation, and being urged with the caſe of this Thief, as a confutation of his opinion, makes anſwer; "that the "Thief was reckoned by "that holy Biſhop *St. Cy-* "*prian*, in the number of "thoſe Martyrs, who were "baptized by their own "blood: which was the caſe "of many, in the times of "perſecution, who had not "the opportunity of a re- "gular baptiſm. That it "was believed alſo and not "improbably, that, as he "hung ſo near on the Croſs, "he might be ſprinkled with "ſome of that water, which "iſſued, together with blood, "from the wound in *Jeſus's* "ſide, and ſo was waſhed "by that moſt holy bap- "tiſm: and farther, that no "body could certainly know, "whether he had not been "regularly baptized either "in his priſon or before he "was taken." [De origin. Anim. l. i. c. 9. l. iii. c. 9.] Which ſhews, how one groundleſs hypotheſis, obſtinately maintained, neceſſarily creates many more of the ſame kind, and intangles us of courſe in a perpetual labyrinth of error and abſurdity.

We find likewiſe an irreconcileable difference, or contradiction, between *Mark* and *John*, concerning the time of the day, when *Jeſus* was crucified. *Mark* ſays expreſly, that it was but *the third hour*, or *nine of the clock in the morning*, when they had actually fixed him on the Croſs: *John* ſays, that it was about *the ſixth hour, or twelve of the clock*, while he was yet under examination before *Pilate* [1].

Peter, Biſhop of Alexandria, who lived in the third century, declares, *that in both thoſe Goſpels the third hour was written, as it might be ſeen in the very original exemplar of St.* John's *Goſpel, which was preſerved to his time in the Church of* Epheſus. But this is looked upon by the generality of the Critics, as an undoubted forgery, either of *Biſhop Peter*, or ſome Tranſcriber of his works, contrived for the ſake of reconciling the two Evangeliſts [2].

St. *Jerom*, who lived about a century later, tells us juſt the contrary. "That *the ſixth hour* "was written originally in both the Goſpels;

[1] Mar. xv. 25. John xix. 14.

[2] Vid. Millii Not. in loc. it. Grot.

But of what authority that relation is, may yet be quæſtioned: and the antient *Alexandrian* Copy accords in the main with the printed Copies.—And it is more probable, that the reading, τρίτη, the *third hour* in *Mark*, ſhould move ſome tranſcribers to read τρίτη too in *John*, to take away the ſeeming difference, and to accord the Evangeliſts, than for any one to turn τρίτη into ἕκτη, contrary to what was before in *Mark*, if they had found it otherwiſe. Hammond on Joh. xix. 14.

"but

"but that the Tranſcribers inſtead of writing "the word at length, put for it the mark ς, "which commonly ſignified the number ſix; "but was miſtaken by other Tranſcribers for "the letter Γ, the numeral mark for *three*; "whence the ſame miſtake was propagated into "all the later Copies [1]." But this ſolution is clogged likewiſe with inſuperable difficulties, and rejected therefore by the Critics; who find, that ſuch abbreviations, or numeral marks were not commonly uſed in thoſe early ages [2]; ſince none of them are to be met with in the oldeſt of thoſe manuſcripts which ſtill remain: nor is it poſſible, that the accidental miſtake of one or two Tranſcribers could be transferred univerſally into all the later Copies.

St. *Auſtin* give us a third ſolution, much more ſubtil and refined, "that *Mark*, who ſays, they "crucified him at *the third hour*, is not to be underſtood to denote the time of his being nailed "to the Croſs, but of that clamor, which was "made againſt him by the Jews, while he was "ſtill before Pilate, when they cried out, *crucify* "*him*, *crucify him*, deſigning to inſinuate there-

[1] Hoc videtur eſſe diverſum, ſed non eſt diverſum: error Scriptorum fuit: & in Marco *hora ſexta* ſcriptum fuit: ſed multi epiſemum græcum ς putaverunt eſſe Γ, &c. Hieron. in Pſalm. lxxvii. it. Theophylact. in Joh. xix. 14.

[2] Neque vero per notas ſcriptos fuiſſe numeros in primigeniis Codicibus, ullo argumento conſtat. Grot. in Mar. xv. 25. Zeger. ib. it. Millii Not.

" by, that the Jews, who made that outcry for " his Crucifixion, were more properly the au- " thors of it, than thoſe miniſters, who after- " wards executed the command of their ſupe- " riors: and that he was more truly crucified at " *the third hour*, by the tongues of the Jews, " than *at the ſixth*, by the hands of the Soldiers. " If you do not like my explication, ſays he, " ſhew me, how it is poſſible to ſolve the con- " tradiction: ſhew, how Jeſus could be cruci- " fied both *at the third* and *the ſixth hour* [1]."

The modern Expoſitors therefore rejecting all the ſolutions juſt mentioned, have hit upon another, ſomewhat more plauſible, in which they generally follow each other; *viz.* " that the " day among the Jews, beginning from ſix in " the morning, was divided into four equal por- " tions of three hours each; called *the third*, " *the ſixth*, *the ninth*, *and the twelfth hours:* the " three firſt of which were the ſtated hours of " public prayer in the Temple, and proclamed " to the people by the ſound of a trumpet. As " *the third hour* then was ſuppoſed to continue " till the next ſounding of the Trumpet, at *the* " *ſixth hour*, ſo whatever was tranſacted within " that interval, how near ſoever to the begin- " ning of the next diviſion, was ſaid, in the " common way of ſpeech, to happen *in the third*

[1] Occulte oſtendere voluit, eos magis crucifixiſſe Jeſum, qui clamaverunt, ut crucifigeretur, quam illos, qui miniſterium Principi præſtiterunt, &c.—Auguſt. de Conſ. Evan. l. iii. § 42.

" *hour.*"

"*hour* [1]." But though this would bring the Evangeliſts nearer to each other, yet it will not reconcile them; ſince *Mark* expreſly affirms, that *Jeſus* was actually crucified before that hour, in which *John* ſays as expreſly, that *Pilate* was ſtill ſitting in judgement upon him. Nor is the notion itſelf true, that ſuch a groſs diviſion of the day was in uſe among the Jews, as may be ſhewn from many paſſages of the New Teſtament: for though *the third, ſixth, and ninth hours*, as being the ſolemn *hours* of religious worſhip, were more remarkable than the reſt, and for that reaſon are more frequently mentioned by the ſacred writers, yet we find, that their day, like to that of the *Babylonians*, from whom they probably learnt the diviſion of it, as the Greeks alſo did, was divided into *twelve hours* [2]. *Are there not twelve hours of the days?* ſays our Lord: and in other places, mention is made of *the ſeventh, tenth, and the eleventh hour*, &c. [3]. So that on the whole, we muſt be forced at laſt, with ſeveral of the Critics, to leave the difficulty, juſt as we found it, chargeable with all the conſequences of a manifeſt inconſiſtency [4].

[1] Vid. Grot. in Matt. xxvii. 45. Zeger. in Mar. xv. 25. Hammond on Joh. xix. 14.

[2] Τὰ δώδεκα μόρια τῆς ἡμέρης παρὰ Βαβυλωνίων ἔμαθον Ἕλληνες. Herodot. l. ii. p. 129. Ed. Lond.

[3] John xi. 9. iv. 52. i. 39. Matt. xx. 26.

[4] Ego ampliandum cenſeo. Nam & illi & hi non ſatis probarunt mihi dicta ſua. Nihil dicit, qui non probat quod dicit. Ego experientia didici, ſæpe decep-

The occurrences alſo, which paſſed at our Lord's ſepulchre, immediately after his reſurrection, are deſcribed ſo variouſly by different Evangeliſts, that the learned have been ſtrangely puzzled to reconcile them, and ſome obliged to give them up as contradictory [1]. *Jerom*, in his anſwer to a quæſtion, which was put to him, how *Mark's account could be reconciled with Matthew's*, ſays; "that *Mark's* teſtimony might "be rejected here as ſpurious, becauſe it was "found onely in a few copies of the Goſpels, "and ſcarce in any of the Greek, and eſpecially, "as it ſeemed to relate things contrary to the "other Evangeliſts [2]." The ſame is confirmed alſo by other primitive writers, who tell us, that *the laſt twelve verſes of* Mark's *Goſpel* were not to be found in many Copies of thoſe early ages. Yet after a moſt diligent ſcrutiny into this fact, it is the general opinion of the Critics, that the ſaid verſes were certainly a genuin part of that Goſpel, but left out by ſcrupulous or weak Tranſcribers, as being thought irreconcileable with the other Goſpels [3].

tos eſſe qui nimium crediderunt viris doctis, etiam Theologis, aliquid aſſerentibus ſine fide, ſine teſte. Druſius, in Mar. xv. 25.

[1] Alia non pauca hoc loco ſunt, quæ non facile quis ex Evangeliſtarum collatione docere poſſet non eſſe pugnantia. Zeger. in Marc. xvi. 5.

[2] Aut enim non recipimus Marci teſtimonium, quod in raris fertur Evangeliis, omnibus Græciæ libris pene hoc capitulum non habentibus; præſertim cum diverſa atque contraria Evangeliſtis ceteris narrare videatur. Hier. ad Hedib. Quæſt. iii. T. iv. p. 172.

[3] Vid. Simon. Hiſt.

But

But to give an inſtance or two of the diſagreement of the Evangeliſts, with regard to what paſſed at the ſepulchre; they all tell us, that the women, who came with Jeſus, out of Galilee, whoſe names and number are variouſly deſcribed, having bought ſweet ſpices to anoint his dead body, ran with great eagerneſs to the ſepulchre in the morning after the Sabbath, very early, at or before the break of day: where, according to *Matthew* and *Mark*, they ſaw but *one Angel*; according to *Luke* and *John*, they ſaw *two*. The Angel in *Matthew was ſitting without the ſepulchre*, on the ſtone, which he had rolled away from the door [1]. The Angel in *Mark* was ſitting within the ſepulchre on the right ſide [2]. The two Angels in *Luke*, appeared to them of a ſudden within the ſepulchre, *and ſtood by them, while they were perplexed and doubting within themſelves, what was become of the body of Jeſus* [3]: but the two Angels in *John* were ſeen by them, when they firſt looked into the ſepulchre, *the one ſitting at the head, the other at the feet, where the body had lain* [4].

To ſolve theſe inconſiſtencies, the Commentators, inſtead of a ſingle apparition of one or more Angels, generally ſuppoſe, that there were ſeveral, at leaſt *three*: and though the Evangeliſts ſeem to deſcribe but one viſit of the women

Crit. du Nouveau Teſt. c. xi.
Jt. Millii Not. in Mar. xvi. 8. Edit. N. T.

[1] Matt. xxviii. 2.
[2] Mar. xvi. 5.
[3] Luk. xxiv. 4.
[4] Joh. xx. 12.

to

to the ſepulchre, they imagine, that there were many; ſometimes *of them all in company together*; ſometimes ſingly, *now of one and then of another*; as if they had done nothing that whole morning, but run backwards and forwards between the city and the tomb [1]. *Theophylact* ſays, "that "the Angel, who was firſt ſeen ſitting on the "ſtone at the door, muſt be ſuppoſed to have "riſen up, as ſoon as the women arrived, and "gone before them into the ſepulchre, where he "appeared to them again on the right, in order "to make *Matthew* conſiſtent with *Mark*: and "*Auſtin* tells us, that the two Angels within the "ſepulchre, who were ſitting, the one at the "head, the other at the feet, where Jeſus had "lain, muſt be ſuppoſed to have ſtood up, as "ſoon as the women entered, to reconcile *John's* "account with *Luke's* [2]." And what effect can all this have, but to confirm that very charge, which they labor to elude, of confuſion and inaccuracy in the ſacred writers; by ſuppoſing them to have jumbled and blended into

[1] Quod diverſa tempora mulierum deſcribuntur, non mendacii ſignum eſt, ut impii objiciunt, ſed ſedulæ viſitationis officium: dum crebro abeunt & recurrunt. Hier. in Matt. xxviii.

Fieri enim potuit, ut mulieres iſtæ non ſemel, neque omnes ſimul, ſed ſemel ſimul, poſtea nunc hæc nunc illa, &c. Cuper. Arcana Atheiſm. revelat. ii. p. 172. it. Toinard. Harm. Evan. p. 132, &c.

[2] Vid. Theophyl. in Matt. xxviii.

Hic intelligendi ſunt ſurrexiſſe Angeli, ut etiam ſtantes viderentur, ſicut eos Lucas commemorat. Auguſt. Conſ. Evan. l. iii. § 69.

one

one ſtory many different tranſactions, which, in order to be rightly underſtood, ought to have been ſeparated and diſtinguiſhed from each other?

According to *Matthew*, *Mark*, and *Luke*, the women, as ſoon as they had ſeen the Angels, and were informed by them of our Lord's reſurrection, returned in all haſte to carry the news of it to the Apoſtles; upon which *Peter* ran immediately to the ſepulchre. But *John*, who wrote the laſt of them, and after he had ſeen their accounts, tells a quite contrary ſtory; that before any apparition, *Mary*, ſeeing onely the ſtone taken away from the door of the ſepulchre, haſtened back to tell it to *Peter*, and to the other Apoſtle, whom *Jeſus* loved, and that *Peter*, accompanied by that Apoſtle, ran away directly to to the place, and ſaw the linen cloaths lying, and the napkin, which was about the head of *Jeſus*, wrapped up in a place by itſelf, and then went back to their own home, without ſeeing any Angel, or *Jeſus* himſelf, as the women are ſaid to have done.

Dr. *Hammond*, explaning the reaſon of this difference, ſays, "that *Luke* writing from notes, "which he had collected, and not from his own "knowledge, obſerves not ſo exactly the order "of time, wherein things were done or ſpoken; "but oftentimes in another method puts toge-"ther things of affinity to one another, though "not done or ſaid at the ſame time [1]."

[1] Hammond on John xx. 11.

But

But this ſolution, though proper on other occaſions, will not ſerve on this: becauſe the want of order, ſo obſervable in the one, or the other of theſe narrations, ſeems chargeable to *John*, rather than to the reſt, whoſe relation of the matter is again confirmed and repeated in the converſation of the *two Diſciples going to Emmaus* [1]. *Grotius*, who uſually imputes theſe difficulties to the general cuſtom of the Evangeliſts, of neglecting the order of time in which things were tranſacted, yet aſſigns a ſpecial reaſon why *John*, in this particular caſe, might think fit to uſe a little artifice, and induſtriouſly invert the true order of the facts; "for leſt the "teſtimony of women, in a point of ſuch mo- "ment as *the reſurrection of Jeſus*, might be "ſuſpected and ridiculed, as it afterwards really "was, *John*, he imagines, reſolved to place *Pe-* "*ter's* teſtimony and his own before it, though "out of their proper time: the truth of which, "at the time of writing his Goſpel, *Peter* had "already ſealed with his blood, as he himſelf "was prepared alſo to do, whenever he ſhould "be called to it [2]."

It is very remarkable alſo, that the ſhort In-

[1] Luc. xxiv. 23, 24.

[2] Apud Johannem eadem quæ hic hiſtoria narratur, nihil enim video cur aliam putemus, cum tot circumſtantiæ, congruant.—— Neque Johanni cur naturalem hic ordinem inverteret juſta cauſa defuit. Sciebat quam imbecille futurum eſſet apud multos teſtimonium muliebre—quare Johannes acturus de re, ut veriſſima, ita creditu difficili, ſuum & *Petri* teſtimonium narrationi præſtruxit, &c. in Matt. xxviii. 2.

ſcription

ſcription or Title, which, by *Pilate's* order, was fixed upon the Croſs, over the head of *Jeſus*, is delivered with ſome variation, by every one of the Evangeliſts.

Matthew ſays; They ſet up over his head his accuſation written,

THIS IS IESVS THE KING OF THE IEWS[1].

Mark; The ſuperſcription of his accuſation was written over;

THE KING OF THE IEWS[2].

Luke; A ſuperſcription alſo was written over him, in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew;

THIS IS THE KING OF THE IEWS[3].

John; *Pilate* wrote a Title, and put it on the Croſs, and the writing was;

IESVS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE IEWS[4].

Now all theſe accounts agree very well with regard to the ſenſe of them, yet it is certain, that there is but one of the four which exhibits the true Inſcription: and though a difference ſo trifling cannot reflect any diſgrace on the veracity of *the Evangeliſts*, it ſhews however a want of that accuracy and exactneſs of truth, which we expect from all thoſe, who undertake to tranſmit to poſterity the authentic copies of public Inſcriptions.

I ſhall add one inſtance more of the ſame kind, trifling indeed with regard to the point

[1] Matt. xxvii. 37.
[2] Mark xv. 26.
[3] Luke xxiii. 38.
[4] John xix. 19.

in

in difference, yet effectual to evince the ſame ſort of inadvertency or miſtake, with regard to the ſtrictneſs of truth. *Matthew*, reciting the teſtimony of *John Baptiſt*, concerning *Jeſus*, gives theſe words as a part of it; *whoſe ſhoes I am not worthy to bear* [1]: but the other Evangeliſts tell us, that the words were, *the latchet of whoſe ſhoes I am not worthy to ſtoop down and unlooſe* [2]. Upon which St. *Auſtin* makes the following remark: " That *to carry ſhoes, and to* " *untie the latchet of a ſhoe*, ſeem indeed to be " different, not in words onely, or the order of " them, or in the manner of ſpeaking, but in " the very thing or fact itſelf—ſo that he, who " has recorded the words which were really " ſpoken by the Baptiſt, has told us the truth, " while he, who has reported them differently, " though he may not be guilty of a lie, will be " thought to have put one thing for another " through want of memory. But no ſort of " falſehood, whether it procede from a lie or " forgetfulneſs, ought to be imputed to the " Evangeliſts; wherefore, if the *Baptiſt*, when " he ſpoke of our Lord's ſhoes, had no other " meaning, but to ſignify the excellence of *Je-* " *ſus* and his own humility, it was the ſame " thing, whether he ſpoke of *carrying or untying* " *ſhoes*; and whoever mentioned the ſhoes after- " wards in either way, with the ſame view of

[1] Matt. iii. 11. [2] Mark i. 7. Luke iii. 16. John i. 17.

" expreſſing

" expreſſing his humility, rightly expreſſed the " Baptiſt's will and meaning [1]."

I ſhall not trouble the reader with any more inſtances of this kind, out of the great number which has been collected by the writers on this ſubject: theſe which I have already produced, are ſufficient for my purpoſe, and the uſe which I ſhall now proceed to make of them.

In the firſt place then, they manifeſtly ſhew, that many of the facts which are recorded in the Goſpels, are related ſo variouſly by the ſeveral Evangeliſts, that they cannot poſſibly be reconciled, or rendered conſiſtent, by all the art and ſubtilty of the moſt expert Commentators. *Origen* declares, " that if any one carefully examines " the inconſiſtencies of the four Goſpels with " regard to hiſtorical facts,—he will find him- " ſelf giddy, as it were, and no longer inſiſt on " the truth of them all, but chuſe to adhere to " one of them ſingly, not daring wholly to re- " ject the faith of Chriſt; or elſe, if he admits " them all, he muſt allow at the ſame time, " that the truth of them does not lie in the out-

[1] Non enim verbis, aut verborum ordine, aut aliquo genere locutionis, ſed etiam re ipſa videtur aliud eſſe, *calceamenta portare*, aliud, *corrigiam calceamenti ſolvere*.—Si enim alterum horum dixit, ille verum videtur narraſſe, qui hoc potuit narrare quod dixit: qui autem aliud, etſi non eſt mentitus, certe vel oblitus, aliud pro alio dixiſſe putabitur. Omnem autem falſitatem abeſſe ab Evangeliſtis decet: non ſolum eam quæ mentiendo promitur, ſed etiam eam, quæ obliviſcendo, &c. De Conſenſu Evangeliſt. l. ii. § 29.

" ward character or letter of them [1]." It will be anſwered, perhaps, that *Origen* was ſo addicted to the allegorical ſenſe of Scripture, and ſo prejudiced in its favor, as not to care what abſurdities were charged upon the literal text, if he could but draw a myſtery out of it. But though this be granted, it will not invalidate his charge of inconſiſtency on the letter of the Goſpels; of which, by his indefatigable ſtudy of the Scriptures, he was of all men the moſt competent Judge; and it was the reality of this very charge, which gave birth to thoſe extravagant interpretations in which he indulged himſelf [2].

St. *Auſtin* lays down a general rule for the ſolution of all theſe difficulties, which he earneſtly recommends to our attention and obſervance, " that whenever we find the Evangeliſts incon-
" ſiſtent, in their accounts of any thing ſaid, or
" done, by our Lord, we are not to ſuppoſe
" them ſpeaking of the ſame thing, but of ſome
" other, very like to it, ſaid or done at a differ-
" ent time. For it is a *ſacrilegious vanity*, he
" ſays, to calumniate the Goſpels, rather than
" believe the ſame thing to have been twice
" performed, when no man can prove, that it
" could not really be ſo: and when this rule
" fails, his next direction is, to take up with
" any ſolution, rather than allow it as a conſe-

[1] Comment. in Johan. T. ii. p. 151. Edit. Huet.

[2] Ego, in Scripturarum enarratione, unum Origenem decem Orthodoxis antepoſuerim. Eraſm. in Gal. ii. 10.

" quence,

"quence, that any of the Evangeliſts had been "guilty, either of a lie or a miſtake [1]." Which is nothing elſe in effect, but to require us to adhere to ſyſtems in oppoſition to facts, and to renounce our ſenſes rather than our prejudices. His rule however has been religiouſly obſerved by the Commentators, who recur to it on all occaſions, and declare the ſame thing to have been done twice or thrice, or till the repetition of it will clear up every difficulty, which diſturbs and perplexes them.

But the point which I am affirming, is evidently proved, not onely by the facts and inſtances produced above, but by the very ſolutions and interpretations, which are given of them upon the contrary hypotheſis, which tho' contrived by men of the greateſt learning and ſagacity in all ages, are yet, generally ſpeaking, ſo forced and unnatural, that they betray themſelves, to be nothing elſe but an artful defence of error. Whereas if they would but candidly

[1] Quod commendare memoriæ diligenter debemus —ut ſi quando talia ſingula apud ſingulos invenerimus, atque in eis contrarium, quod ſolvi non poſſit, occurrat nobis, non hoc eſſe factum, ſed aliud ſimile.—De Conſ. Evang. l. ii. § 69.

Etiam atque etiam retinendum eſt, ſæpius Dominum eadem dixiſſe, ut quod exiſtente contrario ſolvi non potuerit, bis dictum intelligatur. Ib. l. ii. § 106.

Calumniari autem Evangelio, dum non credit iterum factum, quod iterum fieri non potuiſſe nemo convincit, Sacrilegæ vanitatis eſt. Ib. § 77.

Tantum non putes conſequens eſſe, ut quilibet Evangeliſtarum mentitus ſit, aut in tanto & tam ſancto culmine auctoritatis erraverit. De Conſ. Evang. l. iii. § 43.

own, as ſome few of them indeed have done, that the contradictions of the Evangeliſts, like to thoſe of all other Authors, were owing to want of accuracy in recording circumſtances of little moment, or to ſlips of memory, or to different informations, all would be eaſily and naturally accounted for, without any real offence or hurt to the authority of the Goſpel.

For to run over again the ſeveral inſtances produced above; what advantage can the enemies of our religion draw from the difficulties, which are found in the two Genealogies? ſince they both of them agree, in affirming all, which a Chriſtian is concerned to believe on that article; *that Jeſus was of the ſeed of Abraham; of the family of David; and born in the fleſh of the Virgin Mary.* What can it ſignify to us, whether it was *one woman onely, or two,* who anointed *Jeſus*; or whether they anointed his head or his feet? ſince all that is inſtructive in the ſtory, may be equally learnt in either caſe; from the woman, that extraordinary mercies ſhould produce a proportionable return of gratitude and love: from *Jeſus*, a prediction which we ſee accompliſhed at this day; *that the zeal of this woman ſhould be propagated with his Goſpel over the face of the earth* [1]. Of what conſequence can it be, that *Judas's* treachery is told with ſome variation by the different Evangeliſts? ſince all, that is of ſervice to religion, is equally clear in them all; that *Jeſus* foretold to his Diſ-

[1] Matt. xxvi. 13.

ciples

ciples both the Traitor and his treaſon, that when it ſhould come to paſs, *they might believe him to be the Chriſt* [1]. Of what uſe could it be to know, whether it was *one or two* poſſeſſed with Devils; and *one or two* blind, whom *Jeſus* cured, and whether it happened, as he was going, or as he was returning from *Jericho?* it is enough to be aſſured, that all kinds of diſeaſes yielded equally to his power, and were cured by the word of his mouth. Laſtly, what if the Evangeliſts do not agree about the preciſe time of his crucifixion; whether it was at *the third*, or *the ſixth hour:* or in the ſtory of his reſurrection, whether *one or two Angels* appeared; whether *ſitting* or *ſtanding*, or whether *before or after Peter's coming* to the Sepulchre? it is ſufficient that they agree, in confirming all the principal circumſtances, and in declaring them to have been accompanied with ſuch prodigies, as were ſuitable to the dignity and importance of thoſe great events.

Nay, all theſe differences and inconſiſtencies are ſo far from reflecting any diſcredit on Chriſtianity, that, on the contrary, they are found to be of real ſervice towards illuſtrating the truth of it. *This very thing*, ſays *Theophylact*, *gives a ſtronger proof of the integrity of the Evangeliſts, that they have not agreed in all points: for otherwiſe, they might have been ſuſpected to have written by compact* [2]. But while they really tend to

[1] John xiii. 19.

[2] Δι' αὐτὸ γὰρ τοῦτο μᾶλλον ἀλη-

eſtabliſh the authority of the Evangeliſts, they clearly overthrow that hypotheſis, which is commonly entertained concerning them, that in compiling their ſeveral Goſpels, *they were conſtantly inſpired and directed by an unerring Spirit.* This, I ſay, is evident, as well from the facts above ſtated, as from the expreſs declarations of the Evangeliſts themſelves, who are ſo far from pretending to any ſuch privilege, that they in effect diſclame it, placing their whole credit on a foundation, merely human and common to all other writers; on their knowledge of the truth of what they deliver, and on their fidelity in delivering it to the beſt of their knowledge.

Luke profeſſes, that he had received all the principal facts of his Goſpel, *from thoſe, who had been eye-witneſſes and actors in them; from whom he had got a perfect information of all things from the very beginning* [1]. *John* declares, *that he himſelf ſaw, and was preſent at all the tranſactions, which he relates: that he knew them therefore to be true, and recorded them, that others alſo might know and believe them:* which declaration he repeats in the end of his Goſpel, as the ſeal of its veracity [2]. And this is the ſame profeſſion, which is made by all other Hiſtorians, in order to procure credit to what they relate. *Herodotus* declares in ſeveral places, *that he writes*

θεύσιν, ὅτι μὴ καλὰ πάντα ὡμοφώνησαν, &c. Theophyl. Procem. in Matt. [1] Luke i. 1, 2. [2] John xix. 35. xxi. 24. 1 Ep. i. 1, 2, 3.

from

from his own knowledge and eye-ſight: and in others, *from the beſt information which he could get:* and *Thucydides* tells us, like *John*, *that he himſelf was preſent* at many of the tranſactions recorded by him: and in others, like *Luke*, *that he had done every thing in his power, to procure an exact account of them from thoſe, who had been actors in them* [1]. And this likewiſe is the foundation, on which the Advocates of Chriſtianity, both ancient and modern, have conſtantly put the credibility of the Evangelical hiſtory; that the Authors of it were, either eye-witneſſes of it themſelves, or wrote from the information of thoſe who were. Which reaſoning, as ſolid and rational as it has been thought in all ages, yet, upon the hypotheſis of a perpetual inſpiration, would be wholly trifling and impertinent; ſince it could not be of any moment, whether they knew any thing or nothing of the matters related by them, if, as ſome vainly imagine, they were but *mere organs or pipes*, through which God thought fit to convey the knowledge of certain extraordinary facts and divine truths to the world [2].

[1] Τὰ δὲ αὐτοὶ διησάμενοι λέγομεν, τῶν μὲν κατὰ ἀκοὴν παραλαβόντες. Herod. l. ii. p. 147. Edit. Lond.

Οἷς αὐτός τι παρῆν, ἢ παρὰ τῶν ἄλλων ὅσοι δύναλτο ἀκριβείᾳ περὶ ἑκάστου ἐπεξῆλθον. Thucyd. l. i. p. 13. Ed. Oxon.

[2] Spiritus Sancti, cujus ipſi erant organa. Caſaub. Exercit. 15. ad Baron. Ann. 12.

Ita nimirum, ut non ſolum ſententiæ, ſed & verba ſingula, & verborum ordo ac tota diſpoſitio ſit a Deo, tanquam per ſemetipſum loquente.—Eſtius in 2 Tim. iii. 16.

Litterulam unam aut notam eſſe, aut inſcio Evan-

It was once thought neceſſary, for the honor of the Greek tranſlation of the Old Teſtament, called the *Septuagint*, to believe, "that it was "divinely inſpired and dictated by God; and "that ſeventy perſons, ſhut up ſeparately in as "many different Cells, produced their ſeveral "tranſlations, all agreeing to a tittle with each "other, both in the ſenſe and the words." This, though affirmed by all the primitive Fathers, as well as by many of the learned moderns, is now univerſally conſidered, as an undoubted fiction, contrived for the ſake of conciliating the greater reverence to that ancient verſion; which was read, inſtead of the original Hebrew, in all the Synagogues of the Helleniſtic Jews [1]. For beſides the abſurdities which are charged upon this ſtory, and the impertinence of recurring to a miracle, where there was no occaſion for it, and where nothing was wanted to make ſuch a tranſlation, but a competent ſkill in two languages, the many imperfections of the verſion itſelf confute the pretence of its divine origin. The caſe is the ſame with the Goſpels; the hypotheſis of their inſpiration was piouſly invented, to reflect the greater luſtre upon them,

geliſta irrepſiſſe nego. Lightfoot, in Matt. xxvii. 9.

[1] Traditur ſane mirabilem, planeque divinum in eorum verbis fuiſſe conſenſum, ut cum ad hoc opus ſeparatim ſinguli ſederint, ita enim eorum fidem Ptolemæo placuit explorare, in nullo verbo, vel verborum ordine alter ab altero diſcreparet, &c. Auguſt. de Civ. D. l. xviii. c. 42. See this ſtory related at large, and confuted in Dr. Prideaux's Connect. Vol. ii. p. 21.

where

where there was not the leaſt want of it: ſince nothing more is required to eſtabliſh their authority, than to know, as we do in this caſe, that the compilers of them were perfectly informed of all the important facts, which they had undertaken to relate, and zealous to publiſh them for the common benefit of mankind: while many little omiſſions and inaccuracies, which are obſervable in their ſeveral narratives, clearly ſhew, that they could not be guided by a divine and infallible ſpirit. But this will be made ſtill more evident, by conſidering, what the Ancients have delivered to us concerning them.

Matthew, as the primitive writers generally agree, wrote his Goſpel the firſt, and in *the Hebrew tongue*: which, for that reaſon, could not be of general uſe, nor hardly indeed any farther, than to the inhabitants of *Jeruſalem*, where it was publiſhed: for the Greek language was uſed at that time, not only by the Jews, even in their own country, but was the univerſal language *of the Eaſt* [1]. This original Goſpel then being of little or no ſervice beyond the precincts of *Jeruſalem*, was ſoon laid aſide, and

[1] Solus Matthæus Hebræo ſcripſiſſe perhibetur eloquio, ceteri Græco. Aug. de Conſ. Evang. l. i. § 4.

Primus Matthæus Evangelium in Judæa Hebræo Sermone edidit. Hieron. Proœm. in Matth. Vid. Græcor. Patrum teſtimonia de Matthæo a Millio collect. in Edit. N. T.

—Excepto ſermone Græco, quo omnis Oriens loquitur. Hieron. in Epiſt. ad Galat. Op. T. iv. p. 255. Vid. Lightf. Hor. Heb. in Matt. i.

within a few ages afterwards quite loſt; and a Greek tranſlation of it made by *ſome body unknown*, took its place very early, and was received in all Churches, as it is at this day, with a credit and authority equal to that of an Original. In which, though the Tranſlator may be preſumed to have been both faithful and equal to the taſk, yet, for any thing that we know, he may have been guilty of ſome miſtakes, as St. *Jerom* ſuppoſes him to have actually been, and endeavours to ſhew, in one particular inſtance [1].

Mark followed *Matthew*; and perceiving, as we may imagine, in his travels, that an Hiſtory of our Saviour's life and acts was every where wanted and greedily deſired, by the new converts, he wrote his Goſpel, under the direction, as it is believed, of St. *Peter*, whoſe diſciple he was: in which, though he has made ſome few variations, as well as additions to the former Goſpel of *Matthew*, yet he agrees with it ſo exactly in moſt particulars, that, as it is ſaid above, he is thought by the Commentators to have done little more than epitomize it [2].

[1] Quod quis poſtea in Græcum tranſtulerit non ſatis certum. Hieron. de Scriptorib. Eccleſ. in Matt.

Mihi videtur Matthæum, qui Evangelium Hebraico ſermone conſcripſit, non tam *veſpere* dixiſſe, quam *ſero*; & eum, qui interpretatus eſt, verbi ambiguitate deceptum, non *ſero*, interpretatum eſſe, ſed *veſpere*. Ad Hedib. T. iv. par. i. p. 173.

[2] Marcus eum ſubſecutus, breviator ejus videtur. Auguſt. de Conſenſ. Evan. l. i. § 4.

Ut ſæpe ei præſtet interpretis vicem. Grot. in Matt. xxviii. 1.

Luke comes next, a Phyſician of *Antioch*, and a convert probably from paganiſm: who perceiving, that many others had publiſhed accounts, either falſe or imperfect, concerning the life and actions of *Jeſus*, thought it neceſſary to write a third Goſpel, under the direction, as it is thought, of St. *Paul*; and to the intent, as he himſelf declares, that the new Chriſtians might be informed of the certain truth of thoſe things, in which they had been inſtructed, and of which he had procured a perfect information from thoſe, who had been eye-witneſſes. But as he wrote at ſecond hand, and from hearſay onely, of things which he himſelf had not ſeen, he is obſerved to have jumbled his facts together more confuſedly, and deſcribed them more inaccurately than the reſt, who related them from their own knowledge [1].

[1] Vid. Teſtimonia Græcor. de Luca a Millio collecta.

Evangelium, ſicut audierat, ſcripſit; Acta vero Apoſtolorum, ſicut viderat. Hieron. de Scriptorib. Eccleſ.

Apparet illum non ſemel ob rerum cohærentiam, connexuiſſe quæ temporibus erant diſcreta, quod ſuis locis patefiet. Grot in Luc. i. 3.

Luke, who wrote his ſtory from collections, which he had from others, and compiled it himſelf, hath not ſo exactly obſerved the order, wherein the things were done, &c. Hammond, Pref. in Matt.

N. B. This account of *Luke* may help us to ſolve that difficulty in the Martyr *Stephen's* ſpeech, [Act. vii. 16.] in which it is ſaid, that *the Patriarchs were buried in Sichem, in the Sepulchre which Abraham bought of the Sons of Emmor:* whereas, it was not *Abraham*, but *Jacob*, who bought that Sepulchre: and the Sepulchre, which *Abraham* purchaſed, was in a different place, and bought of a different perſon; *Ephron the*

John

John publiſhed his Goſpel, the laſt of the four, to ſupply the defects and imperfections of the other three; moved to it, as the Primitive Fathers inform us, "by the earneſt ſollicitation of "his friends, and of all the Biſhops of *Aſia*, "who were perſuaded, that ſuch an hiſtory "from him, would be of more ſervice, and "more likely to gain credit than any which "were already publiſhed. Whereupon, at their

Hittite, the Son of Zohar. [Gen. xxiii. it. xxxiii. 19. it. Joſh. xxiv. 32.] This paſſage then, as it now ſtands in the book of the Acts, is a manifeſt contradiction to the truth of hiſtory, as all the Critics acknowledge; ſome of whom have attempted to give an emendation of the text, but to no purpoſe, ſince the conſent of all the copies in all ages, effectually eſtabliſhes the preſent reading: others have ſeverally offered the beſt ſolutions, which they could invent, yet all of them forced and ridiculous, and no body, beſides *Cappellus*, has ventured to intimate, that it might poſſibly be *a ſlip of memory in Stephen* himſelf. Vid. Cappelli Not. in Act. vii. 16.

But it does not ſeem probable, that a perſon *full of the Holy Ghoſt*, as *Stephen* is ſaid to have been, and who appears alſo, from this very ſpeech, to have been greatly converſant with the *Moſaic* writings, ſhould be capable of committing ſuch a blunder, which may eaſily and naturally be accounted for by aſcribing it to *Luke*, the compiler of *the Acts*; who being a late convert from Paganiſm, and but imperfectly acquainted with the Jewiſh learning and hiſtory, might eaſily miſtake in the names of perſons, and confound two facts ſo nearly reſembling each other. So that *Cappellus* might, with as much reaſon, have charged *Luke* with a miſtake here, as he has actually done elſewhere, in the caſe of *Theudas*, the Impoſtor, who, according to *Joſephus*, did not make his appearance till ſeveral years after that time, in which *Luke* introduces him. Acts vii. 16. vid. Cappelli not.

"requeſt,

" requeſt, having read over the other Goſpels, " he confirmed in general the truth of them, " yet obſerved, that many things of conſe- " quence were either wholly omitted, or too " ſlightly touched in them; eſpecially the ac- " tions of *Jeſus*, which preceded the death of " *John the Baptiſt*, and almoſt all thoſe miracles, " which deſerved the moſt to be recorded, and " were the propereſt for inſtruction; and above " all, the declaration of his divinity and exiſt- " ence, prævious to his birth at *Bethlehem*. For " which reaſons, as all the Ancients affirm, he " undertook at laſt, with ſome reluctance, to " write his own Goſpel in a very advanced " age:" which on that account *Grotius* calls *a collection of things omitted by the other three*. And thus, as a writer of Antiquity obſerves, " we " have now a complete and perfect hiſtory of " the Life and Acts of *Jeſus*: for what was not " taken notice of by *Matthew*, is recorded by " *Mark*: what was forgotten by *Mark*, is added " by *Luke*: and what was omitted ſtill by all " the three, is ſupplied by *John* [1]."

This is the ſumm of what primitive Antiquity has delivered, concerning the hiſtory of the Goſpels; which is utterly inconſiſtent with the notion of their being divinely inſpired: for

[1] Coactus eſt ab omnibus pene tunc Aſiæ Epiſcopis, & multarum Eccleſiarum legationibus de divinitate Salvatoris altius ſcribere, &c. Hieron. Prolog. in Matt.— Vid. Teſtimonia Patrum Græcor. de *Johanne*, a Millio collecta.—

Additum a Johanne, in hac quaſi prætermiſſorum collectione. Grot. in Joan.

if

if any one of them had been a perfect work, as every work muſt needs be which is directed by the Spirit of God, there had been no uſe or want of the reſt; nor would they in reality have been written: unleſs we can believe, with ſome of the Primitive Fathers, *that it was neceſſary that there ſhould be four: becauſe there are four elements; four climates; four cardinal winds; four cardinal virtues, &c* [1].

The belief then of *the Inſpiration and abſolute infallibility of the Evangeliſts*, ſeems to be more abſurd, than even of Tranſubſtantiation itſelf: for this, though repugnant to ſenſe, is ſupported by the expreſs words of Scripture; whereas the other, not leſs contrary to ſenſe, is contrary at the ſame time to the declarations of the Evangeliſts themſelves. Yet ſuch is the force of prejudice, that the generality of Expoſitors take great pains to ſearch out texts and arguments for the ſupport of this favorite hypotheſis; not conſidering, that if they were able to produce any, from which they could extort ſuch an interpretation, it would tend onely to the hurt and diſcredit of Chriſtianity itſelf, by faſtening upon it a doctrine, contradictory to fact and experience.

But in truth, all the arguments which are alledged for this doctrine, are generally ſo trifling, that inſtead of confirming, they render it

[1] Quatuor, quoniam quatuor ſunt partes Orbis terræ, &c. Auguſt. de Conſ. Evang. l. i. § 3. it. vid. Irenæum. l. iii. c. 11. Theophyl. Proœm. in Matt.

onely

onely more contemptible to men of judgement. Thus the learned *Lightfoot* attempts to prove the divine inſpiration of *Luke*, from the word ἄνωθεν, in the preface of his Goſpel, which implies, as is interpreted by this Critic, that *Luke* had received his information of the things which he relates, *from Above, or from Heaven* [1]: whereas it ſignifies nothing more, but that he had ſearched and traced them out from their very ſource, or beginning: in which ſenſe it is frequently applied by all the beſt writers of antiquity, and even by *Luke* himſelf in another place [2].

I ſhall not dwell therefore any longer on the proof of this point; which, from the facts above recited, and the profeſſions of the Evangeliſts themſelves, as well as the accounts which are given of them by the ancients, ſeems evident to a demonſtration; but ſhall procede, as I at firſt propoſed, to conſider, what uſe may be made of the opinion here affirmed, in the controverſies which have been agitated, concerning *the grounds of Chriſtianity*, and eſpecially in thoſe, which relate to *the prophecies of the Old Teſtament*, as they are cited and applied in the New.

Soon after *Jeſus* had entered upon his miniſtry, and gathered to himſelf a number of Diſci-

[1] Aſſecuto omnia cœlitus vel e ſupernis.— Hunc ſenſum nos amplectimur: utpote quod extra omnem controverſiam ſit, eum cœleſti afflatu calamum dirigente ea ſcripſiſſe, quæ ſcripſit. Vid. Hor. Hebraic. in Luc. i. & in Act. i.

[2] Vid. Eraſm. & Grot. in Luc. i. 3. it. in Act. xxvi. 5.

ples,

ples, he choſe out of them twelve, to be his immediate companions and conſtant attendants during his reſidence on earth, and, after his aſcenſion into heaven, to be the principal inſtruments of publiſhing his religion to all nations. Theſe were called his Apoſtles; perſons of the loweſt condition of life, chiefly Fiſhermen; void of every ornament and advantage, which learning, art, and languages, uſually add to the characters and faculties of men: and choſen by their Maſter for this very reaſon, that the triumphs of his Goſpel might be the more conſpicuous, in ſubduing all the powers and wiſdom of the world by the miniſtry of perſons ſo abject and deſpicable. The Jews in the mean while, to whom the Goſpel was in the firſt place propoſed, were zealouſly fond of their old religion, and on that account, ſtrongly prejudiced againſt his new one: and being forbidden by their law, to give credit even to miracles, when wrought in favor of doctrines which ſeemed to contradict the inſtitutions of *Moſes*, were the more jealous, and on their guard againſt this new Prophet; leſt, by his mighty works, he might lead the people aſtray from their ancient worſhip. Wherefore *Jeſus*, in order to remove their ſcruples, and calm their apprehenſions, took all occaſions to convince them, that he was not come *to deſtroy, but to fulfil their law*; that he was the *very Meſſiah*, whom *Moſes and the Prophets* had foretold and prepared them to expect; and that his character and commiſſion

were

were clearly deſcribed and prefigured to them in their own books, to which he appealed, as the witneſſes of his veracity [1].

This was the general doctrine of *Jeſus:* but the Evangeliſts have recorded but very few of the particular prophecies, which he applied, to the confirmation of it: the event however ſhews, that it was ſo well ſupported by him, as to have great weight with many of the Jews.

The Apoſtles then, having been ſpecially inſtructed in this point by their Maſter, before his death, and more clearly ſtill after his reſurrection, no ſooner entered upon their miniſtry, than they made this, as they were commanded [2], the chief ſubject of their preaching; *that the perſon and character of Jeſus were deſcribed and foretold by the Law and the Prophets:* by the force of which argument the Apoſtle *Peter*, in one of his firſt ſermons, is ſaid to have converted *three thouſand ſouls* [3]. The reſt of the Apoſtles, as we may imagine, were not leſs zealous and active, in publiſhing the ſame doctrine, both by preaching and writing; and *Matthew* eſpecially, who wrote his Goſpel for the particular information of the Jews, appears to have been more diligent than any of them, in ſearching the old Scriptures for paſſages, which in any ſenſe could be applied to ſome circumſtance or action of *Jeſus's* life: and, like all other men, warmly perſuaded and fond of a new hypotheſis, ſeems

[1] Matt. v. 17. John v. 39, 45, 46, &c. [2] Acts x. 42. [3] Acts ii. 41.

to

to have ſtrained it in a few inſtances, farther than it would naturally reach, and to have applied it even to ſome, to which it has no relation at all.

Mr. *Whiſton*, of whoſe piety and zeal for the honor of Chriſtianity no man can doubt, has freely and candidly owned, *that the Apoſtles might poſſibly be ſuppoſed, to have been miſtaken ſometimes in their applications of theſe prophecies* [1]. If their inſpiration therefore, or infallibility, was thrown out of this quæſtion, what I am here ſaying of *Matthew*, would readily be admitted; that, out of zeal for an Hypotheſis, of whoſe truth he was aſſured, he might be apt, like all other men, to ſtretch it to caſes to which it did not belong. This is allowed with regard to the *Jewiſh Doctors*, by an ingenious and orthodox Defender of Chriſtianity, who ſays; "that "under the ſtrong expectations, which they en- "tertained of *the coming of a Meſſiah*, it may "well be ſuppoſed, that the learned among "them had, with more than ordinary attention, "ſearched the prophetic writings for marks and "deſignations of him, and might probably ap- "prehend him to be delineated in ſome paſ- "ſages, which had no relation to him. If we "conſider the obſcurity of the prophecies be- "fore their completion; how apt a man, who "reads ſuch writings with an intention to one "point, would be, to fancy a relation to it, and "with what fondneſs he would entertain any "appearance of ſo reputable a diſcovery; it

[1] See his Litteral Accompliſhment, p. 20. § x.

can

" can ſcarce be imagined, but that inſtances of " this kind muſt have happened [1]." What this writer thinks ſo probable of the learned Doctors of the Jews, muſt needs appear more probable of the Apoſtles, who were not learned: who, as I have ſhewn elſewhere, being liable to ſlight miſtakes, and inadvertencies, in the repreſentation of plain and ordinary events, may more reaſonably be preſumed to be ſo, in the interpretation of dark prophecies. But as it is not my deſign to inquire into probabilities, but into facts, ſo I ſhall lay before the reader two or three examples of *Matthew's* method of citing and applying the *prophecies of the Old Teſtament* to the tranſactions of the New.

Thus, ſays he, it is written by the Prophet; *And thou* Bethlehem *in the land of* Judah, *art by no means the leaſt among the Princes of* Judah, *for out of thee ſhall come a Governor, who ſhall rule my people* Iſrael. But the words of the Prophet are; *But thou* Bethlehem Ephratah, *though thou be little among the thouſands of* Judah, *yet out of thee*, &c. [2]. *St. Jerom* obſerves on this place, " that there is a ſtrange difference between " *Matthew* and the Septuagint-tranſlation of " the Bible, but a ſtranger ſtill between him " and the Hebrew text, for he agrees with nei- " ther of them either in the words or the ſenſe." And he ſuggeſts two reaſons for this diſagreement; " that *Matthew* might probably intend,

[1] Dr. Rogers Serm. v. p. 123. [2] Matt. ii. 5, 6. Micah v. 2.

" by this way of applying Scripture, to reprove " the *Scribes and Phariſees*, who uſed the ſame " negligent manner of interpreting it: or elſe, " that the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles did not cite " the paſſages of the Old Teſtament from books, " but from their memories, which ſometimes " failed them, and gave riſe to thoſe variations, " which are found among them in the order, " and in the words, and ſometimes alſo in the " ſenſe [1]."

Modern Commentators are generally more cautious of charging the leaſt ſuſpicion of a miſtake on the Evangeliſt, though they cannot reconcile his meaning with that of the Prophet: but *Eraſmus* laughs at the weakneſs of thoſe, " who take the authority of the Scriptures to be " endangered by the allowance of an error in " them, and declares; that the divine Spirit, " who governed the minds of the Apoſtles, ſuf- " fered them on ſome occaſions to err, through " ignorance, affection, or wrong judgement, " without any real detriment to the credit of the " Goſpel [2]."

[1] Quanta ſit inter Matthæum & Septuaginta, verborum ordiniſque diſcordia, ſic magis admiraberis, ſi Hebraicum videas — ſenſuſque contrarius eſt, Septuaginta ſibi hoc in loco & Hebraico concordante. — Hieron. de Opt. gen. interpret. T. iv. par. ii. p. 253. — It. Ejuſdem Comm. in Micah. v. T. iii. p. 1531.

[2] Neque enim continuo vacillet totius Scripturæ auctoritas, ſicubi variet vel in verbis vel in ſenſu — Spiritus ille divinus mentium Apoſtolicarum moderator paſſus eſt ſuos ignorare quædam & labi, &c. in Matt. ii. 6.

Matthew

Matthew having ſhewn the place of our Saviour's birth to have been foretold by the Prophets, procedes to ſhew the ſame alſo, concerning the place of his habitation. *He came*, ſays he, *and dwelt in a City called* Nazareth, *that it might be fulfilled, which was ſpoken by the Prophets, He ſhall be called a* Nazarene [1]. Now it is agreed by all, that the paſſage cited here by *Matthew*, as delivered by the Prophets, is not to be found in any Prophet or writer of the Old Teſtament whatſoever: and it is pleaſant to ſee, to what ridiculous ſhifts the Commentators are driven, in their attempts to account for it [2]. They firſt adapt ſome particular ſenſes of their own to the word, *Nazarene*, in which ſtill they all differ from each other, and then labor to ſhew, that in one or other of thoſe ſenſes, it may be collected from ſeveral diſperſed paſſages, and obſcure hints found in different parts of the Old Teſtament. *Grotius* tells us, *that when the Evangeliſts cite the Prophets, in this looſe and general manner, it frequently indicates a ſenſe, picked up from many ſeparate paſſages of the Old Teſtament, rather than from any ſingle text* [3]. Yet no man has ever pretended to make out from any or all

[1] Matt. ii. 23.

[2] This text, ſays Mr. *Whiſton*, is intirely wanting in all our Copies, Hebrew and Greek, nor do there at preſent the leaſt footſteps of it remain, ſince the Jews corrupted their Copies.— See Eſſay on the O. T. p. 104. it. The Literal Accompliſhment of Script. Prophecies, p. 4.

[3] Sæpe ſenſum multis ex locis depromptum, magis quam unius loci verba indicat. &c. Grot. in loc.

thoſe different texts, that ſenſe of the word *Nazarene*, which is here applied by *Matthew*, to denote *an inhabitant of* Nazareth. *The difficulty is*, ſays Dr. *Hammond*, *how his dwelling at* Nazareth *ſhould be ſaid to be the completion of a prophecy, which relates not at all to his dwelling there* [1]. *The learned*, ſays *Heinſius*, *have taken ſuch pains about this paſſage, that whole books have been written upon it; yet not one writer has been able to hit upon any thing, which could ſatisfy even himſelf* [2].

Again; *Then was fulfilled*, ſays *Matthew*, *that which was ſpoken by* Jeremiah *the Prophet, ſaying*; *And they took the thirty pieces of ſilver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of* Iſrael *did value, and gave them for the Potter's field, as the Lord appointed me* [3]. This prophecy, as all the Expoſitors allow, is not to be found in the Prophet *Jeremiah*, from whom it is expreſly cited. "Something like to it, ſays "*Jerom*, is to be met with in *Zachariah*; which, "though not differing much in ſenſe, yet varies "greatly in the words, and in the order of them. "I have ſeen however, adds he, this very text "word for word, in *an apocryphal book of* Jere- "miah, which a Jew lately ſhewed me: yet the "prophecy ſeems rather to have been taken "from *Zachariah* [4]." He was unwilling to

[1] Hammond in loc.

[2] Heinſii Exercitat. Sacr. in loc.

[3] Matt. xxvii. 9, 10.

[4] Hoc teſtimonium in *Jeremiah* non invenitur: in *Zachariah* vero quædam ſimilitudo fertur: & quanquam ſenſus non multum diſcrepet, tamen & ordo & impute

impute here to *Matthew*, the practice of citing his prophetical teſtimonies from *apocryphal* books, which yet others, both among the antients and moderns, have not ſcrupled to affirm likewiſe very freely of *St. Paul*, and the other Apoſtles [1]. It is obſerved by the Critics, that ſome few copies of the New Teſtament, in the early ages, had not the word *Jeremiah* in this text; which they ſuppoſe to have been omitted deſignedly by the Tranſcribers, for the ſake of clearing *Matthew* from the imputation of a miſtake: as *Auſtin* himſelf, from the conſent of the beſt Greek copies, is forced to allow [2]; tho'

verba diverſa ſunt. Legi nuper in quodam Hebraico volumine, quod mihi Hebræus obtulit, *Jeremiæ Apocryphum*, in quo hæc ad verbum ſcripta reperi. Sed tamen mihi videtur magis de *Zacharia* ſumptum teſtimonium. In Matt. xxvii. T. iv. p. 134.

[1] Ut omittam longas & varias inquiſitiones, quibus hunc locum nonnulli interpretum involvunt, hoc mihi ſimpliciſſimum judicatur, ut dicamus Evangeliſtam *ex apocrypho quodam Jeremiæ volumine* hoc deſumpſiſſe teſtimonium, &c. Vid. Zeger. in Matt. xxvii. 9. Vid. it. Grotium in loc.

Zacharias, Chryſopolitanus Epiſcopus, p. 343. teſtatur ſe hoc teſtimonium inveniſſe in *ſecretis Eliæ Prophetæ*, qui liber eſt Apocryphus, non Canonicus. Eadem ſcribit Georgius Syncellus, cujus verba invenies apud Scaligerum in notis ad Euſebium, de Apoſtolo etiam Paulo libros Apocryphos citante. Druſius, in 1 Ep. ad Corinth. ii. 9. it. Zeger. ibid.—Vid. etiam de Chriſto Apocryphis utente. Orig. Comm. in Matt. p. 225. Edit. Huet.

[2] Vid. Millii Notas in loc. it. Grot. ibid.

Qui diligentius in Græcis Codicibus Evangelium conſideraverunt, in antiquioribus Græcis ita ſe perhibent inveniſſe; cur autem de nonnullis Codicibus tolleretur,

of all the primitive Fathers, he ſeems the moſt bigoted to the notion, *that the Evangeliſts could not err.* To heal this difficulty therefore, he gives us two ſolutions of his own invention, but both of them ſtrangely abſurd and ridiculous.

Firſt; he ſays, "that *Matthew* was directed by "the Holy Spirit, to commit this miſtake of "putting *Jeremiah* for *Zachariah*; which, upon "recollection, he would ſurely have corrected, "if he had not been convinced, that it was ſug- "geſted by the ſecret counſil of Providence for "wiſe purpoſes. For ſince all the Prophets "were inſpired by one and the ſame Spirit, and "had but one and the ſame view in their writ- "ings, people would ſee by this inſtance, that "it was wholly indifferent, which of them was "named or cited, for what was ſaid by any of "them; and that the ſayings of *Zachariah* were "as much *Jeremiah's* as *Zachariah's*, and ſo *vice* "*verſa*; ſo that there was no occaſion for *Mat-* "*thew*, to correct this ſeeming blunder, when "he knew himſelf, at the time of making it, to "be under the direction of the Holy Ghoſt [1]."

2dly, He obſerves, "that there is an account "in *Jeremiah*, how the Prophet bought a field "of his uncle's ſon; not indeed for *thirty pieces* "*of ſilver*, for theſe are mentioned onely by *Za-*

audax imperitia fecit, cum turbaretur quæſtione, quod hoc teſtimonium apud Jeremiam non inveniretur. Auguſt. de Conſ. Evang. l. iii. § 29.

[1] Ibid. § 30.

"*chariah*,

" *chariah*, as the purchaſe of a field is men-
" tioned onely by *Jeremiah:* the reader there-
" fore finding *Jeremiah* cited in the Goſpel, and
" not finding in *Jeremiah*, the *thirty pieces of*
" *ſilver*, which are added by *Matthew*, might
" thence be admoniſhed, that theſe alſo were
" applicable to *Jeſus*, and ſo come at the ſenſe
" of another prophecy, which was myſtically
" related to him." As to the reſt of this text in *Matthew*; *the price of him, that was valued, whom they of the children of* Iſrael *did value, and gave them for the Potter's field, as the Lord appointed me:* " It is not, as he ſays, to be found,
" either in *Zachariah* or *Jeremiah*, but was my-
" ſtically and elegantly added by the *Evangeliſt*,
" who had learnt from Chriſt himſelf, that it
" related to *the thirty pieces of ſilver*, for which
" he was ſold: for as the price of the field in
" *Jeremiah* is ſaid, to have been put into an
" earthen veſſel, ſo the price of *Jeſus* was ap-
" plied to the purchaſe of a Potter's field [1]."

This explication was too extravagant, to be followed, as uſual, by modern Commentators: who account therefore for this difficulty, by ſuppoſing either ſome inadvertency of the firſt tranſcribers, in putting *Jeremiah* for *Zachariah*; or *a ſlip of memory* in *Matthew* himſelf, or, what is more probable, that the paſſage was cited from that *apocryphal book of Jeremiah*, in which *St. Jerom* had read it *word for word:* which they ſhew, to have been the caſe likewiſe of many

[1] Auguſt. de Conſ. Evan. l. iii. § 30.

other paſſages of the New Teſtament [1]. *Jerom* indeed tells us, "that when we meet with any "citations made by the Apoſtles, as from the "Prophets, which cannot be found in the Old "Teſtament, we muſt not recurr preſently *to* "*the abſurdities of apocryphal books*, but believe "them to be really written in the old Scrip-"tures, yet cited by the Apoſtles, not accord-"ing to the words, but to the meaning of "them; ſo that it cannot eaſily be diſcovered, "in what part of the Scriptures they are writ-"ten, except by the learned and ſtudious [2]." And to ſay the truth; the learned may draw what ſenſes they pleaſe out of any book whatſoever, by the ſame method, with which they have made out the ſenſe of the paſſages now before us.

[1] Aut enim culpa Scribarum commutatum nomen aut memoriæ vitio. Eraſm. in Matt. xxvii. 8.

Jeremiæ nomen irrepſiſſe videtur, vel culpa exſcribentis, vel memoriæ vitio. Druſius, ibid. Vid. it. Bezam, Lightfoot.

Hoc mihi ſimpliciſſimum videtur, Evangeliſtam ex Apocrypho quodam Jeremiæ volumine ſumſiſſe teſtimonium, & idem quoque Apoſtolum Paulum feciſſe. Zeger. ib. Tale Enochi illud apud Judam. [14, 15.] tale illud [1 Cor. ii. 9.] Grot. ibid.

[2] Hoc autem totum nunc idcirco obſervavimus, ut etiam in ceteris locis, ſicubi teſtimonia quaſi de Prophetis, & de veteri Teſtamento ab Apoſtolis uſurpata ſunt, & in noſtris Codicibus non habentur, nequaquam ſtatim ad Apocryphorum ineptias & deliramenta curramus; ſed ſciamus ſcripta ea quidem eſſe in Veteri Teſtamento, ſed non ita ab Apoſtolis edita, &c. in Epiſt. ad Epheſ. Op. T. iv. p. 392.

Laſtly,

Laſtly, *Matthew* ſpeaking of *Jeſus* ſays; *He caſt out Spirits with his word, and healed all that were ſick; that it might be fulfilled, which was ſpoken by* Iſaiah, *ſaying; Himſelf took our infirmities and bare our ſickneſſes* [1]. *Eraſmus* remarks here, "that, in the application of this pro-"phecy, *Matthew* has wreſted it a little to his "own purpoſe [2]." It is taken from the liii[d] chapter of *Iſaiah*, where the Prophet is deſcribing the character of *a ſuffering Meſſiah*, who was to take our ſins upon him, and give himſelf up to death for the expiation of them: to which ſenſe *Jeſus* himſelf often alludes, declaring, *That he came to give his life a ranſom for many, and that his blood was ſhed for many, for the remiſſion of ſins* [3]. And to this ſenſe all the other Apoſtles conſtantly apply it; telling us; how *Jeſus bare our ſins, in his own body, on the tree; was offered for the ſins of many; was the Lamb ſlain, and propitiation made for the ſins of the whole world* [4]. But what the Prophet had foretold of a *Meſſiah, taking upon himſelf our ſins*, the Evangeliſt applies to *Jeſus, as taking away our bodily diſeaſes:* an interpretation, wholly foreign to the meaning of the prophecy; peculiar to *Matthew*; and no where confirmed by any other of the ſacred writers.

[1] Matt. viii. 16, 17.

[2] Adduxit hoc teſtimonium Matthæus, nonnihil ad ſuum deflectens negotium. Eraſm. in loo.

[3] Matt. xx. 28. xxvi. 28.

[4] Heb. ix. 28. Rom. iii. 25. 1 Pet. ii. 24. 1 Joh. ii. 2, &c.

Theſe

Theſe inſtances are ſufficient for the uſe, which I propoſe to make of them.

As to the firſt; the beſt ſolution, which has been given of it, is; "that either *Matthew's* "memory failed him in the recital of it; or that "he cited it imperfectly and inaccurately on- "purpoſe, to reprove the Scribes and Phariſees "for the ſame looſe and negligent method of "interpreting the Scriptures, in which they "freely indulged themſelves."

The ſecond, as all the Interpreters agree, is not to be found in any part of the Old Teſtament: and the whole, which is ſaid for it, is, "that in ſome ſenſe or other, it may be collect- "ed from ſeveral different expreſſions of dif- "ferent Prophets, joined and tacked together; "and ſo made to ſuit, by way *of accommoda-* "*tion* [1], as Dr. *Hammond* ſays, with ſome "particular circumſtance of *Jeſus's* life.

The third was taken, in all probability, from a ſpurious and *apocryphal book, of no authority*, falſely aſcribed to the Prophet *Jeremiah*, in which it was read by *St. Jerom*, and never found in any other [2].

The fourth is manifeſtly ſtrained by *Matthew* to a ſenſe, totally different from that of the Prophet, as it is explaned by all the other ſacred writers.

[1] Hamm. on Matt. ii. 23.

[2] Omittamus earum Scripturarum fabulas, quæ apocryphæ nuncupantur— in his enim etſi invenitur aliqua veritas, tamen propter multa falſa, nulla eſt Canonica Auctoritas. Auguſt. de Civ. D. l. xv. c. 23.

But

But as in theſe inſtances, we find *Matthew* accommodating the ſenſe of Prophecies, to an agreement with the facts of his Goſpel, ſo, on the other hand, we find him alſo accommodating his facts, to the ſenſe of the prophecies. For example; He tells us, that *Jeſus*, preparing to make a ſolemn entry into *Jeruſalem*, ordered *two of his Diſciples, to go and bring to him an Aſs and a Colt with her*, which they would find tied together in a certain village: and they went, *as Jeſus commanded them, and brought the Aſs and the Colt, and put on them their cloaths and ſet him thereon. All this was done*, ſays he, *that it might be fulfilled, which was ſpoken by the Prophet, ſaying; Tell ye the daughter of* Sion, *Behold thy King cometh unto thee meek, ſitting upon an Aſs and a Colt, the foal of an Aſs* [1]. The Commentators are puzzled here to determine, on which of the two *Jeſus* rode; whether on *the Aſs*, or *the Colt*; while the letter of the text ſeems to declare, that he ſat upon them both; as ſome of the Antients, and of the moderns alſo have interpreted it; who ſolve the ſeeming abſurdity, by ſuppoſing, *that he firſt mounted the one, and then the other: the Aſs denoting the Jewiſh, and the Foal, the Gentile Church; of both which he was now become the common Head* [2]. But all this

[1] Matt. xxi. 5. Zach, ix. 9.

[2] Ad quod quæri utri Dominus jumento inſederit, pullone an aſinæ: alii ipſum utrique, prius uni deinde alteri inſediſſe reſpondent: atque in hac ſententia eſt Auguſtinus de Conſ. Evang. l. ii. c. 66. Alii de pullo

difficulty

difficulty will vaniſh at once, if we take the account of this ſame fact, as it is given by the other Evangeliſts; who expreſly ſay; that it was *the Foal* or *the Colt* onely, which *Jeſus* ſent for and rode upon: which is the moſt probable, as well from the nature of the thing, as from the concurrent teſtimony of three againſt one. But it is remarkable, that as *John* relates the ſame fact differently from *Matthew*, ſo he cites the ſame prophecy alſo as differently: and as, in his Goſpel, he ſpeaks of no more than *the Colt*, ſo in the prophecy he drops the mention of *the Aſs*, and takes no more, than what relates to *the Colt* [1]. Whence it appears, that as *Matthew* adapted his fact to the letter of the prophecy, ſo *John* accommodated the letter of the prophecy to the reality of the fact.

The late Dr. *Rogers*, treating this very quæſtion, in one of his Sermons, affirms *the inſpiration of the Apoſtles* to be a fundamental point in it: and, upon that hypotheſis, gives two general ſolutions of all the objections, which are made to the application of theſe prophecies in the New Teſtament. 1ſt, "That ſuch appli-"cations of them, though groundleſs or falſe in "themſelves, yet being ſuch, as were commonly "received, and paſſed for current among the

duntaxat — & quod hic de utroque dicitur animante, ad Allegoriam tranſmittendum autumant, populi Judaici & populi Gentilis. Zeger. in Matt. v. it. Cafaub. in Matt. v. 7. it. Origen. Edit. Huet. p. 430. E.

[1] John xii. 15.

"Jews,

" Jews, might properly be urged to them by per-
" ſons inſpired, as arguments *ad hominem*, upon
" their own conceſſions, without any impeach-
" ment of their inſpiration. 2dly, To bring the
" matter, as he ſays, to a ſhort iſſue, he affirms,
" that all ſuch applications muſt neceſſarily be
" true, becauſe they were made *by perſons in-*
" *ſpired* [1]." The abſurdity of which reaſon-
ing ſhews, to what contemptible ſhifts the moſt
plauſible writers will be reduced, when intangled
with the defence of Syſtems, which are contra-
dictory to plain facts.

When *Jeſus* opened to the Jews theſe evidences
of his miſſion, from their own Prophets, he ad-
moniſhed them *to ſearch the Scriptures*, for the
proof and trial of the truth of what he alledg-
ed [2]. The Apoſtles did the ſame; conſtantly
exhorting them, to examine the Old Teſtament,
that they might ſee, whether the teſtimonies, to
which they appealed, were ſo or not: and the
people of *Berœa* are particularly commended, for
ſearching the Scriptures more diligently, than the
reſt of the Jewiſh Converts [3]. Now there could
be no other meaning in this appeal to the Scrip-
tures, on the one ſide, and this ſearch of them,
on the other, but to try, whether the particular
teſtimonies, referred to by the Apoſtles, were
really to be found in them, and in that very
ſenſe, to which they were applied. This is the
foundation, on which Chriſt and his Apoſtles

[1] Rogers Serm. p. 121. and p. 127. [2] John v.
39. [3] Acts xvii. 11.

put the deciſion of this quæſtion: and it is the ſole foundation, on which the Jews could rationally be convinced and converted to the faith of the Goſpel. To affirm then, as the Doctor abovementioned has done, *that the Inſpiration of the Apoſtles*, is the fundamental point, on which it depends, is in effect, to teach the contrary, to what Chriſt and his Apoſtles had taught; "that "we need not trouble ourſelves on this occaſion "with ſearching the Scriptures; and that the "ſearch of them is fruitleſs; for though the "paſſages, referred to by the Evangeliſts, ſhould "not be found in them, which is the caſe of "ſome, or found in a ſenſe quite different from "that, to which they are applied, which is the "caſe of others, yet we muſt receive them all as "infallibly true, becauſe they are delivered by "perſons inſpired."

But to ſpeak a word or two to each of his ſolutions. As to the firſt, it is utterly incredible, that perſons inſpired and ſpecially commiſſioned by God, to propagate a particular doctrine, and ſupplied conſequently with proofs the moſt authentic and demonſtrative of its truth, could on any account be reduced, to make uſe of trifling or equivocal arguments for the ſupport of it; much leſs of ſuch, as are falſe and groundleſs. Yet if this ſhould in any manner be thought probable, in an occaſional conference or debate with private perſons, who had been trained and accuſtomed to that ſort of reaſoning, it is ſurely inconſiſtent with any notion of inſpiration, to

publiſh

publiſh ſuch arguments in writing, to all the world, and to all poſterity, as the ſtanding and perpetual proofs of the Chriſtian doctrine, which they knew in reality to be no proofs at all, except to a few particular Jews, of thoſe very times; and which, inſtead of doing ſervice to religion, could ſerve onely for matter of doubt and cavil to all ſucceding times.

As to his ſecond ſolution; if we ſhould aſk, how it appears, that the Apoſtles were actually inſpired, in their interpretations of theſe prophecies? it will be anſwered, I ſuppoſe, becauſe they *wrought miracles* [1]. And ſo far indeed I agree, that in the act of working miracles, they were certainly inſpired with an extraordinary power; but when that act was over, and the ſpecial purpoſe of thoſe miracles ſerved, it is reaſonable to believe, from the evidence of thoſe facts, which I have elſewhere ſet forth, that they returned to the condition of fallible men.

Peter wrought many miracles, yet was charged afterwards by *Paul, with acting in contradiction to the truth of the Goſpel* [2]. *Paul* wrought as many, yet in ſome caſes *diſclames any inſpiration* [3]. *Barnabas* alſo wrought miracles, yet *Paul* and he quarrelled ſo far, as to part in great wrath from each other, about *Mark, the Evangeliſt*, whom *Paul* looked upon as a Deſertor; *Barnabas*, as an honeſt man: where one of them

[1] Rogers's Serm. 128. [2] Galat. ii. 14. [3] 1 Cor. vii. 12, 25. 2 Cor. xi. 17. Gal. iii. 15.

was

was ſurely miſtaken, and both of them probably to be blamed [1].

If the Apoſtles indeed had called the Jews together, and wrought a miracle before them, in confirmation of any particular interpretation of Scripture, this reaſoning would be juſt, and the miracle rightly alledged for the truth of ſuch interpretation: but ſince this was not the caſe, the inference is certainly groundleſs, that miracles wrought at one time, prove the workers of them, to have been infallible at all times. Nay the power of working miracles is ſo far from proving thoſe, who are indued with it, to be perpetually inſpired, or ſpecially favored by God, that it does not prove them even to be good or honeſt men: ſince according to the conſtant teſtimony of the moſt eſteemed and orthodox of the Primitive Fathers, it was poſſeſſed ſometimes by *wicked men, and Heretical Chriſtians*, corrupt both in faith and manners [2].

Let us now ſee, what uſe the enemies of Chriſtianity have endeavoured to make of the prophecies applied by the Evangeliſts in the manner above ſpecified; and what anſwer the

[1] Acts xv. 39.

[2] Ut intelligamus, quædam miracula etiam Sceleratos homines facere, qualia Sancti facere non poſſunt.— Quapropter aliter Magi faciunt miracula; aliter boni Chriſtiani; aliter mali Chriſtiani. Auguſt. Op. T. vi. p. 71.

Hoc adverſus Hæreticos, qui probationem fidei ſuæ ex eo, ſi ſignum aliquod fecerint, arbitrantur. Hier. T. iv. p. 252. Vid. it. Chryſ. T. iii. p. 64. D. it. T. vii. p. 376. D. Edit. Bened.

truth

truth of the caſe will oblige us to give to them. The Author of a *Diſcourſe on the Grounds and Reaſons of the Chriſtian Religion*, aſſerts, "that "the foundation of it is laid by the Evangeliſts, "on the proof of this point, *that the miſſion and "character of Jeſus were foretold by the Prophets*; "and that the validity of this proof depends "intirely on the force of thoſe particular pro- "phecies which the ſame Evangeliſts have ap- "plied to the illuſtration of it, in their ſeveral "Goſpels [1]." Upon this hypotheſis, he undertakes to ſhew, "that the Prophecies, ſo ap- "plied by them, do not at all relate to *Jeſus*, in "their proper and literal ſignification, but onely "in a ſecondary, typical and figurative ſenſe: "and then by expoſing this way of interpreting "them, as equivocal, precarious, and incapa- "ble of yielding any rational conviction, he "imagines that he has done, what he aimed at, "and overturned the foundation of the Chriſtian "religion."

And in truth, if we admit, that Chriſtianity has no other foundation than what he has aſſigned to it, it might not perhaps be difficult for him to make good the reſt: for upon that ſuppoſition, he has thrown many objections in our way, which it is ſcarce poſſible to get clear of. But while he fancied himſelf to be demoliſhing foundations, he was battering onely ſuch parts of the edifice, as ſerve for its ornament, rather than

[1] See Diſcourſe on the Grounds and Reaſons of the Chriſtian Religion, p. 4, 5, 26, 27.

its ſupport. He profeſſes to ſhew, that the *Prophecies cited by Matthew*, relate to *Jeſus* onely in a figurative ſenſe; and if he had ſhewn, that ſome of them did not relate to him in any ſenſe at all, he would have done no more, that what ſome of the primitive Fathers, as well as modern Critics had done before him, without deſigning or doing the leaſt hurt to Chriſtianity.

Jeſus, as it is ſaid above, declared in general, *that Moſes and the Prophets had teſtified of him:* but ſince the Evangeliſts did not think it neceſſary to give a preciſe account, or deduction of the ſeveral prophecies, which were alledged by him in proof of that declaration; it is ſufficient to take it, juſt as we find it; as being true in general; without thinking ourſelves obliged to defend all the particular inſtances and applications, which were offered afterwards in ſupport of it, by fallible men. It is *Jeſus* onely, who is called *the Truth*; and who alone was incapable of error: but *he ſuffered his Apoſtles*, as *Eraſmus* ſays, *to be drawn ſometimes into miſtakes, by a wrong judgement or affection*, &c. [1]. Theſe then being full of zeal for this new doctrine, taught them in general by their Maſter, yet wanting his unerring ſpirit, may probably be ſuppoſed, from an eagerneſs of explaning and illuſtrating it, to have ſtrained it in ſome caſes farther than it would bear; in the ſame manner,

[1] Paſſus eſt ſuos ignorare quædam & labi, errareque alicubi judicio ſive affectu. In Matth. ii. 6.

as

as their Succeſſors continued alſo to do more remarkably in the following ages; who, full of the ſame zeal, yet without the ſame knowledge, ſtretched this argument of prophecy ſtill farther, and diſcovered, as they imagined, many more inſtances of it applicable to *Jeſus*, than ever the Evangeliſts and Apoſtles had dreamt of.

This therefore may ſerve for a general anſwer to all the objections, which are made *to the prophecies of the Old Teſtament, as they are cited and ſaid to be fulfilled in the New:* that we are not obliged to receive all ſuch applications of them, as infallible; that Chriſtianity does not depend upon it; that whoever ſhall attack it on this article, will labor onely in vain, unleſs he can ſhew; that the *miſſion and character of Jeſus* were not, in any manner or ſenſe at all, prefigured in the Old Teſtament, or that *Moſes and the Prophets had no where teſtified of him.* This is the ſingle point, which can affect or hurt the cauſe of Chriſtianity, and all the cavils, which fall ſhort of this, may juſtly be ſlighted, as of no real weight in this quæſtion.

Mr. *Whiſton* in defending *The Literal Accompliſhment of the Scripture-prophecies*, againſt the Author of *The Grounds and Reaſons of the Chriſtian Religion*, has produced *forty-five prophecies* from the Old Teſtament, which are all cited in the New, in proof *of the Meſſiahſhip of Jeſus*, and which he declares to have been *clearly and directly fulfilled, without the leaſt pretence of any reply from*

that Author or any other whatſoever [1]. Now if any number of theſe, how ſmall ſoever, are found to be as clearly accompliſhed, as he takes them to be, they are ſufficient to ſupport the authority of the Goſpel, though all the reſt were thrown aſide.

But to ſay the truth, the grounds of our faith, in theſe *later ages of the Church*, do not lie in the particular interpretations of prophecies, made by men, who might be miſtaken, and who, as *Jerom* ſays more than once, *by truſting to their memories, in citing theſe very prophecies, were frequently miſtaken in the words; and ſometimes in the ſenſe of them* [2]. Nor is the evidence of prophecy ſo proper, in theſe days, *to convert men to the faith of Chriſt, as to confirm thoſe, who have already embraced it* [3]: Serving chiefly, as St. *Paul* ex-

[1] See The Literal Accompliſhment of Script. Proph. &c. p. 1—19. See alſo The Supplement, &c. p. 1, 2.

[2] Sunt autem qui aſſerunt; in omnibus pene teſtimoniis, quæ de Veteri Teſtamento ſumuntur, iſtiuſmodi eſſe errorem, ut aut ordo mutetur aut verba; & interdum ſenſus quoque diverſus fit: vel Apoſtolis, vel Evangeliſtis non ex libro carpentibus teſtimonia, ſed memoriæ credentibus, quæ nonnunquam fallitur. Hieron. in Micah. c. v. Op. T. iii. p. 1531.

Hoc autem in omnibus pene teſtimoniis, quæ de veteribus libris in novo aſſumta ſunt Teſtamento, obſervare debemus: quod memoriæ crediderint Evangeliſtæ vel Apoſtoli; & tantum ſenſu explicato ſæpe ordinem commutaverint; nonnunquam vel detraxerint verba vel addiderint. Id. in Ep. ad Galat. c. iii. Op. T. iv. p. 253.

[3] Qualia in Prophetis multa, apta non ad convin-

preſſes it, *not to them, who believed not, but to them, who believe* [1].

Upon the firſt promulgation of the Goſpel, while the converſion of the Jews was the principal object of our Savior's miniſtry, and afterwards of his Apoſtles, the argument of prophecy was, of all others, the beſt adapted to perſuade and conquer the prejudices of that nation. But in preaching the Goſpel to the Gentiles, not acquainted with the Jewiſh Scriptures, nor tinctured with any Jewiſh prejudices, the teſtimony of its miracles, and the purity of its doctrines, were the moſt affecting proofs of its divine origin. Yet when by the evidence of theſe, people had once received the Chriſtian faith, and acquired a competent knowledge of it, they would then perceive, that the argument of prophecy, was a part alſo of the evidence, eſſentially neceſſary to complete the demonſtration of its truth. And on this foundation *Grotius* has built the beſt Apology for it, which has ever been publiſhed perhaps ſince the times of the Apoſtles.

To conclude; the chief purpoſe of theſe inquiries, is, to ſhew, that Chriſtianity cannot be defended to the ſatisfaction of ſpeculative and thinking men, but by reducing it to its original ſimplicity, and ſtripping it of the falſe gloſſes, and ſyſtems, with which it has been incumbered, through the prejudices of the pious, as well as the arts of the crafty and the intereſted. One

cendos incredulos, ſed ad confirmandos, qui credidere. Grot. Vot. pro pace. p. 104.

[1] 1 Cor. xiv. 22.

of the principal of theſe incumbrances, as far as I am able to judge, is the notion, which is generally inculcated by our Divines, concerning *the perpetual inſpiration and infallibility of the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts:* a notion, which has imported ſuch difficulties and perplexities into the ſyſtem of the Chriſtian religion, as all the wit of man has not been able to explane: which yet will all be eaſily ſolved, and vaniſh at once, by admitting onely the contrary notion, *that the Apoſtles were fallible:* which is a ſort of proof that generally paſſes with men of ſenſe for demonſtrative; being of the ſame kind, by which *Sir Iſaac Newton* has convinced the world, of the truth of his philoſophical principles.

For this great Philoſopher, by conſidering the real effects and productions of nature, and applying the cauſes of thoſe, which were within the reach of ſenſe and experiment, to all other phænomena of a ſimilar kind, more diſtant and remote from the ſame trial, arrived at laſt, by a chain of conſequences, at the diſcovery of that univerſal principle, by which the beautiful order of this viſible world is regulated, and all the particular motions and activities of its conſtituent parts perpetually directed; which in every other hypotheſis, had been perplexed with inſuperable difficulties. *Deſcartes* took the contrary method: he firſt conceived the Idea of his univerſal principle, and by the force of his great wit and comprehenſion, made it correſpond ſo aptly with the principal phæno-

mena

mena of nature, that it was received with great applauſe by the learned. But when it came to be examined afterwards with rigor, and was found irreconcileable to fact and experience, it gradually loſt ground, and is now generally rejected by men of Science.

The caſe is the ſame in Theological, as in natural inquiries: it is experience alone, and the obſervation of facts, which can illuſtrate the truth of principles. Facts are ſtubborn things, deriving their exiſtence from nature, and tho' frequently miſrepreſented and diſguiſed by art and falſe colors, yet cannot be totally changed, or made pliable to the Syſtems, which happen to be in faſhion; but, ſooner or later, will always reduce the opinions of men, to a compliance and conformity with themſelves.

Wherefore, as we learn from daily experience that prejudice, paſſion, want of memory, knowledge or judgement naturally produce obſcurity, inaccuracy and miſtakes in all modern writings whatſoever; ſo when we ſee the ſame effects in antient writings, how ſacred ſoever they may be deemed, we muſt neceſſarily impute them to the ſame cauſes. This is what ſenſe and reaſon preſcribe, and what will be found at laſt the onely way of ſolving all the difficulties above intimated: whereas our Theoriſts, who come provided with ſyſtems which they impoſe as the Catholic rule, by which the Chriſtian doctrine muſt be explaned, are driven to ſuch miſerable ſhifts and abſurdities, in their attempts to accommo-

date that rule to the particular facts of the Gospel, that, inſtead of clearing it of its difficulties, they never fail to obſcure and perplex it ſtill more, till they render it incompatible with any conſiſtent and rational belief.

A N

A N

E S S A Y

ON THE

GIFT OF TONGUES.

TENDING

To explane the proper notion and nature of it, as it is deſcribed and delivered to us in the Sacred Scriptures;

AND

As it appears alſo to have been underſtood by the Learned both of the ancient and modern times.

A N

E S S A Y

ON THE

GIFT OF TONGUES.

THE gift of tongues, of which I am now going to treat, was firſt conferred by Chriſt on his Apoſtles, about ten days after his Aſcenſion, in a public and ſolemn aſſembly of all the Diſciples in *Jeruſalem*, on the feaſt of *Pentecoſt*; as the account of it is delivered to us by St. *Luke*, in the following words:

Acts ii.

1. *And when the day of Pentecoſt was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.*
2. *And ſuddenly there came a ſound from heaven, as of a ruſhing mighty wind, and it filled all the houſe where they were ſitting.*
3. *And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it ſat upon each of them.*
4. *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghoſt, and began to ſpeak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*
5. *And there were dwelling at Jeruſalem, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.*

6. *Now*

6. *Now when this was noiſed abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, becauſe that every man heard them ſpeak in his own language.*
7. *And they were all amazed and marvelled, ſaying one to another, Behold, are not all theſe, who ſpeak, Galilæans?*
8. *And how hear we, every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?*
9. *Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Meſopotamia, and in Judæa, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Aſia,*
10. *Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Ægypt, and in the parts of Libya, about Cyrene, and ſtrangers of Rome, Jews and Proſelytes,*
11. *Cretes and Arabians; we do hear them ſpeak in our tongues, the wonderful works of God.*
12. *And they were all amazed and were in doubt, ſaying one to another, What meaneth this?*
13. *Others mocking, ſaid, Theſe men are full of new wine.*

From this narrative of the original collation of this miraculous gift of tongues, we find it to have been tranſacted in the ſame manner, which God is ſaid to have uſed on other occaſions, whenever he thought fit to ſtrike the minds of men with an awful ſenſe of his immediate preſence. That is, by ſome extraordinary noiſe, as *of a wind violently ruſhing*, and ſhaking the place, and the appearance alſo of fire, or flame ſuddenly flaſhing, to the amazement of thoſe who beheld it. "The manner of exhibiting this

"gift,

" gift, ſays Dr. *Lightfoot*, was in *tongues of fire*, " that the giving of the Holy Ghoſt, at the in- " itiating of the Chriſtian Church, might an- " ſwer the giving of the Law, at the initiating " of the Jewiſh: and ſo it did, both in time " and manner; that being given at *the feaſt of* " *Pentecoſt*, and in an appearance of fire, and ſo " likewiſe this." But what is peculiar to the caſe before us, is, that this fire is ſaid to have aſſumed the ſhape *of cloven tongues*, and to have ſitten ſome time in that form, on the heads of the Apoſtles. Hence we ſee, how the Painters, in all their deſcriptions of this ſtory, have fixed upon the head of each Apoſtle, *a flame of fire*, ſplit and divided into ſome reſemblance of a cloven tongue. Yet that, which is mentioned in the text to have ſitten upon each of them, is interpreted by ſome Critics, to relate, not, as it is commonly underſtood, to *the figure of a cloven tongue*, which appeared like to fire, but to the Spirit itſelf, with which they were then inſpired, and which accordingly ſat, or reſided upon them for ſome time [1]. And this indeed

[1] *And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire: and it ſat upon each of them*; v. 3. which is thus interpreted by an eminent Critic, *Laurentius Valla*, in his Comment on the place. " They are miſtaken, " ſays he, who take the fire " to have reſted on the heads " of the Apoſtles, when it is " ſpoken of *the Spirit* which " ſat upon them. Their " tongues alſo are ſaid to " have been cloven and fiery, " as it were, to denote that " variety of languages, with " which they were indued; " not that any *fiery tongues* re- " ally ſat on their heads, as

ſeems

ſeems very probable: for though the paſſage itſelf may appear at firſt ſight to carry a different ſenſe, yet, by conſidering all its circumſtances, we cannot reaſonably collect any thing more from it, than that a fire from heaven flaſhed ſuddenly into the room, and filled it with an extraordinary light, which, like all other Phænomena of that ſort, no ſooner appeared than vaniſhed. For when, upon the rumor of this miracle, all the ſeveral nations, who dwelt at *Jeruſalem*, flocked in crouds to the place, to inform themſelves of the truth of it: if the forms of *cloven tongues* had continued to ſit on the heads of the Apoſtles, that would have been the firſt thing which muſt have ſtruck them with wonder and ſurprize: but it is evident from the text, that the multitude ſaw no appearance of that kind: for though they are ſaid to have been greatly amazed, it was not at what they ſaw, but what they heard; *viz. a number of illiterate men, born in the midſt of* Galilee, *addreſſing themſelves freely to each different nation, in its own proper language.*

The ſame inference may be drawn alſo from the effect, which this miracle had upon the natives of *Jeruſalem*; who, not underſtanding the

" ſome will have it." [Vid. eund. ad loc.] St. *Jerom* alſo ſeems to allude to the ſame interpretation: " They were " baptized, ſays he, ſo ef- " effectually by the Holy " Ghoſt, that the whole " room was filled, in which " they were ſitting, and the " fire of the Spirit found its " wiſhed for reſidence in " them, and divided their " tongues." Op. T. iv. par. i. p. 178. Edit. Bened.

ſtrange

ſtrange languages, which the Apoſtles were ſeverally ſpeaking, imagined them preſently to be drunk, and uttering ſome ſenſeleſs jargon of their own, which wine onely had inſpired; a notion, which they could not eaſily have entertained, if they had ſeen this cœleſtial fire ſitting at the ſame time on their heads: ſince ſo conſpicuous a prodigy muſt needs have ſuggeſted a different reflection, and obliged them to acknowledge the finger of God in it. We cannot however think it ſtrange, that fire flaſhing from heaven, and ſuddenly vaniſhing, ſhould yield ſome reſemblance *of tongues* to the eyes of the multitude: for this is no more than what is natural, and what we may obſerve, in ſome meaſure, from every flame that flaſhes from the clouds; and breaks itſelf of courſe, into a number of ſmall and pointed particles, not remote from that ſhape. Hence, in the *Hebrew* language, we find the *flame, or fire, that devoureth the ſtubble*, called by *Iſaiah, the tongue of fire*. Where the Critics obſerve, *that a flame is ſo called by the Prophet, on the account of its likeneſs to a tongue, both in its color and ſhape; as being red, and tending towards a point* [1]. So that the *cloven tongues* in the text, are to be conſidered as a mere *Hebraiſm*, not properly tranſlated, which ſignifies nothing more, than a *flame of fire burſt*

[1] לשון אש—Sicut ſtipulam devorat *lingua ignis*. [Vulg. Iſa. v. 24.] i. e. Flamma: quod ea linguæ ſpeciem præ ſe fert: nam rubet, & in acutiem tendit. Vatab. in locum.

into

into the room, whoſe broken and divided particles flaſhed over the heads of the Apoſtles, in the form, as it were, of fiery tongues [1]. But from all the circumſtances already mentioned, it ſeems reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that the fire itſelf, as ſoon as it had illuminated the room, in ſuch a manner, as to indicate ſomething miraculous and ſupernatural in it, immediately vaniſhed, as well as *the ruſhing wind*, with which it was accompanied.

As to the nature of the gift, which was conferred in this extraordinary manner, it was a faculty of ſpeaking *new and ſtrange languages*, infuſed inſtantaneouſly by God into the Apoſtles, in order to convince all thoſe different nations, then reſiding in *Jeruſalem*, that they were authoriſed and commiſſioned by a divine power, to preach the Goſpel of *Jeſus*. But though they were all equally indued with the ſame faculty, and are all ſaid to have given proofs of it in this ſame aſſembly; we are not to imagine that they all ſpoke together, or at the ſame time, for that could onely create confuſion; but that one or two of them perhaps addreſſed themſelves by turns, to different parts of the company, and expounded to each in their own tongue, *the wonderful works of God:* according to that rule, preſcribed afterwards by St. *Paul*, for the exerciſe of this very gift in all public aſſemblies,

[1] Διαμεριζόμεναι γλῶσσαι ὡσεὶ πυρός. Acts ii. 3. Vid. Heinſii Exercit. ad loc.

that

that thoſe, who poſſeſſed it, *ſhould ſpeak ſingly, and in their proper courſe, one after another* [1].

St. *Paul*, who, as he himſelf tells us, was indued with this gift in its fulleſt meaſure, and the beſt acquainted therefore with its true value, ranks it in the loweſt claſs of ſpiritual gifts; and as a thing of little or no worth: beſtowed ſometimes on perſons, who do not ſeem to have underſtood the very languages which they ſpoke, but wanted *an interpreter*, to explane their own words to them: and he cenſures that zeal, which the Chriſtians of thoſe days expreſſed for it, as a *childiſh affection*, which prompted them to prefer what was ſtrange and ſurprizing, to what was uſeful and edifying [2].

But the principal end and proper uſe of this gift, was to ſerve, on ſome ſolemn occaſions, as a *ſenſible proof and illuſtrious ſign*, that a divine influence reſted on thoſe, who were indued with it. Thus our Saviour, when he gave the firſt promiſe of it to his diſciples, ſays, *theſe ſigns ſhall accompany thoſe who believe—they ſhall ſpeak with new tongues*, &c [3]. And St. *Paul* declares, that *tongues were given for a ſign, not to thoſe who believe, but to thoſe who believe not* [4]. Which ſign, as ſoon as it had ſerved that parti-

[1] 1 Cor. xiv. 27.

[2] "He, that ſpeaketh in "a ſtrange tongue, ſpeaketh "not unto men, but unto "God: for no man under- "ſtandeth him.—Wherefore "let him, who ſpeaketh in a "ſtrange tongue, pray, that "he may interpret." Ib. ver. 2,13,14, &c. it. c. xii. 10,28.

[3] Mark xvi. 17.

[4] 1 Cor. xiv. 22.

cular purpoſe, for which it was given, ſeems to have ceaſed and totally vaniſhed.

There are two or three other paſſages in the *Acts*, which have ſome relation to this which I am now conſidering: for when the diſciples in *Jeruſalem* were aſſembled together with *Peter* and *John*, and praying earneſtly to God, to grant them courage *to preach the word with boldneſs, and to perform ſigns and wonders in the name of Jeſus*, we read, that their prayer was no ſooner finiſhed, *than the place was ſhaken in which they were aſſembled*; as a divine ſignal, and ſure token, that their prayer was accepted. Thus alſo, when *Paul* and *Silas were praying to God in priſon, there was ſuddenly a great earthquake, ſo that the foundations of the priſon were ſhaken, and its doors opened, and every one's bands were looſed* [1]. We may learn likewiſe from the Old Teſtament, that it was uſual with God, even under the Jewiſh diſpenſation, to employ theſe extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, as *pledges* or

[1] Acts iv. 31. xvi. 26. *Grotius* here obſerves, *that theſe extraordinary movements were given, as ſigns of God's powerful interpoſition, and of ſome great thing to follow.* [Vid. eund. ad loc.] And *Wolfius* alſo remarks, how the Gentiles were poſſeſſed with the ſame notion, that the preſence of God was uſually ſignified by *ſome vehement motion or concuſſion of the air and earth.* [Vid. Com. ad loc.]

Conſtat Aventinæ tremuiſſe cacumina Sylvæ,
Terraque ſubſedit, pondere preſſa Jovis.

The earth ſhook, ſays the Pſalmiſt, *the heavens alſo dropped at the preſence of God, even* Sinai *itſelf was moved at the preſence of God, the God of* Iſrael.

ſigns,

ſigns, either to inſure the performance of ſome promiſe, or to demonſtrate the collation of ſome benefit.—Thus *Samuel*, when he anointed *Saul* to be King over *Iſrael*, informs him of *three ſigns*, which would be given to him, as a proof that the Kingdom was deſtined to him by God: the third of which is, *that the Spirit of the Lord would come upon him, and he ſhould propheſy, and be turned into another man:* and *when theſe ſigns*, ſays he, *ſhall come upon thee, then do as occaſion ſhall ſerve thee, for God is with thee* [1]. Thus alſo, when *Moſes* choſe *ſeventy Elders* out of the people, to aſſiſt him in the adminiſtration of the government, *God transferred his Spirit from* Moſes *unto thoſe ſeventy*, as *a ſign* or token, both to them and to the people, that they were ſelected to this office by divine appointment: and it *came to paſs, that while the Spirit reſted upon them, they propheſied and did not ceaſe* [2]. Hence flow thoſe expreſſions, which we often meet with in St. *Paul*, of *the ſeal, the earneſt, the witneſs of the Spirit*, given in the hearts of the believers [3]; as a ſure pledge of God's peculiar favor. For, *as the ſeal of a ring*, ſays *Grotius*, *impreſſed on a bond, renders the whole firm and unqueſtionable, ſo the ſeal of God's ſpirit, impreſſed on men's hearts, leaves no room to doubt of his paternal love of them* [4].

I find but two other paſſages in the New

[1] 1 Sam. x. 2, 8. [2] Numb. xi. 25. [3] 2 Cor. i. 22. v. 5. Eph. i. 13, 14. Rom. viii. 16. [4] Vid. Grot. in Epheſ. i. 13.

Teſtament, where we have any particular account of the collation of this *gift of tongues*; which, in both of them, appears to have been conferred for no other purpoſe, than what I have already intimated, to ſignify to the company then aſſembled, the immediate preſence and interpoſition of the Deity. For example; in the firſt of them, we read, that when St. *Peter*, by the command of God, had inſtructed *Cornelius* and his family, in the grounds of the Chriſtian faith, *the Holy Ghoſt fell upon all who heard him, and they ſpake with tongues*. But of what ſervice could a *variety of languages* poſſibly be, among a few perſons of the ſame family, and probably of the ſame tongue, unleſs it were, to give a freſh proof to *Peter*, by this effect of his miniſtry, how powerfully he was ſupported by the divine aſſiſtance; and to ſhew the Gentile proſelytes, that they were now admitted to a participation of the ſame privileges with the Jews, and to convince the Jewiſh converts at the ſame time, who accompanied *Peter* from *Joppa*, of their errors and prejudices, with regard to their ancient rites; and that theſe extraordinary favors of heaven were no longer limited to the circumciſed onely, or to the ſeed of *Abraham*, but were now laid open and imparted in common to all nations: for, as the text informs us, *they of the circumciſion, who believed, were aſtoniſhed, as many as came with* Peter, *becauſe, that on the Gentiles alſo was poured out the Gift of the Holy Ghoſt, for they*

they heard them ſpeak with tongues, and magnify God [1].

In the other paſſage we are told, " how St. " *Paul* happened to meet with certain Diſciples " at *Epheſus*, who had not received any other " baptiſm but that of *John*, nor ever heard of " *any Holy Ghoſt*; whereupon he baptized them " in the name of *Jeſus*; and having laid his " hands upon them, *the Holy Ghoſt came on them* " *and they ſpake with tongues* [2]." Now theſe were but *twelve* in number, all probably of the ſame country and language, as well as of the ſame faith: ſo that the gift of tongues could not be of any other benefit on this occaſion, than to give a teſtimony to St. *Paul*, as well as to the men themſelves, that the act, which they had been performing, was well pleaſing to God.

St. *Auſtin* ſays, " that when Chriſt, after his " Aſcenſion, ſent down the Holy Spirit which " he had promiſed, *the moſt eminent and neceſſary* " *ſign* of his actual deſcent upon the Diſciples " was, that *every one of them ſhould ſpeak in the* " *tongues of all nations* [3]." St. *Chryſoſtom* alſo taking occaſion to inquire into the meaning of *the kinds, or diverſities of tongues*, which are mentioned ſo often by St. *Paul*, interprets it in the

[1] Acts x. 45, 46.

[2] Ibid. xix. 6.

[3] Cujus venientis in eos, qui crediderant, tunc ſignum erat maximum & maxime neceſſarium, ut uniuſque eorum linguis omnium gentium loqueretur. De Civ. D. l. xviii. c. 50.

ſame manner, and to the ſame ſenſe. " Antient-
" ly, ſays he, every one who believed and was
" baptized, ſpoke preſently with divers tongues,
" for the ſake of manifeſting the Spirit within
" him. For as the men of thoſe days were in-
" firm in the faith, and the ſpiritual gifts not
" diſcernible to the eyes of the fleſh, ſo a ſenſible
" gift was beſtowed upon them, that the ſpiri-
" tual might be made manifeſt: wherefore he,
" who was baptized, was inabled to ſpeak, not
" onely in our tongue, but in that of *the Per-*
" *ſians*; in that of the *Indians*; and in that of
" the *Scythians*; to the intent, that the unbe-
" lievers might learn, that he was indued with
" the Holy Ghoſt. This was a *ſenſible ſign*, as
" it was heard by their bodily ears: and this
" *ſenſible ſign* made the inviſible grace of the
" Spirit evident to all: and this *ſign* was called,
" *the kinds of tongues* [1].

Hence the learned *Dodwell* declares, " that
" the Holy Ghoſt was generally beſtowed on
" the new converts, at the time of their bap-
" tiſm, by ſome viſible and external ſign, called
" the *manifeſtation of the Spirit*; by which the
" unbelievers themſelves were aſſured beyond
" all doubt of the reality of the gift." In the number of which external ſigns, he reckons *a lambent flame*, and *the gift of tongues* [2]. But

[1] Vid. Chryſoſt. Oper. T. iii. p. 76. Edit. Benedict.

[2] Spiritus ita baptizatis ut plurimum collatus erat, ut externo aliquo ſigno ſe manifeſtarit: quam Spiritus φανέρωσιν, appellabant— ita ut de Spiritus dono ne quid ipſi

according

according to Dr. *Lightfoot*, theſe ſpiritual gifts or ſigns were not beſtowed on all promiſcuouſly, who were baptized, but on a certain number onely, whom the Apoſtles were directed by the Holy Ghoſt to lay their hands upon, and whom God had appointed to be Preachers.

It is evident then, from the facts and teſtimonies already alledged, that the chief, or ſole end rather of this *gift of tongues*, was, to ſerve as a *ſenſible ſign* in that infirm ſtate of the firſt Chriſtians, that thoſe, to whom it was vouchſafed, were under a divine influence, and acting by a divine commiſſion. And this indeed may be collected from the account, recited above, of the firſt communication of it to the Apoſtles. For in ſuch an aſſembly, as is there deſcribed, compoſed of ſeveral different nations, it is not reaſonable to think, that this *diverſity of tongues* was given to the Apoſtles, for the ſake of converting thoſe nations, by the mere force of ſuch diſcourſes, as they were inabled to make to each in their own tongue: for that would have required more time, than the nature of ſuch a meeting could allow; nor could any ſpeeches of that ſort, made ſucceſſively to different parts of the company, in different languages, be proper to perſuade the whole, but to confound ra-

dubitare poſſint infideles. — Diſſert. in Iren. ii. p. 205.

In hoc ſignorum numero, ignis lambens. Ib. p. 106.

Ad Spiritus φανέρωσιν pertinuiſſe donum illud linguarum, fidemque eo argumento factam apud illos, qui non ante credidiſſent. Ib. p. 110.

ther and perplex them. For if we ſuppoſe the Apoſtles, to have made each a ſeparate diſcourſe; to the *Parthians* for inſtance, in the *Parthian*; to the *Ægyptians*, in the *Ægyptian*; or to the *Romans*, in the *Latin* tongue; it is certain, that the greateſt part of the Aſſembly, who did not underſtand thoſe languages, would remain all that while amazed, and unedified; and this gift of tongues, if it had not been accompanied by ſome other power more perſuaſive and efficacious, would have expoſed the poſſeſſors of it to ridicule onely and contempt; agreeably to what St. *Paul* declares to the *Corinthians*, *If the whole Church be come together into one place, and all ſpeak with tongues, and there come in thoſe who are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not ſay, that ye are mad* [1]?

Now all this is actually verified by the ſtory before us; in which we find, that, as long as the Apoſtles were diſplaying this miraculous faculty, the greateſt part of the company, who heard them by turns, ſpeaking in their own languages, were ſtruck with amazement, to perceive a ſet of rude *Galilæans*, ſo learned and accompliſhed of a ſudden, with all this variety of ſtrange tongues; and *they were all in doubt, and aſked one another, what could be the meaning of it:* while the reſt, who underſtood nothing of any of thoſe tongues, took all, which the Apoſtles were uttering, for the mere effect of drunkenneſs; till *Peter* obſerving, that their new

[1] 1 Cor. xiv. 23.

gift

gift had wrought its proper effect, by imprinting a general perſuaſion of ſomething very wonderful in it, and raiſing an impatience in the company to expect the event, roſe up, and putting an end to all that diverſity and diſſonance of languages, began to explane to them, in an affecting and continued diſcourſe, and in a tongue, which they all underſtood, how "what "they had juſt ſeen and heard, was not the effect "of wine and drunkenneſs, but of the wiſe "counſil and power of God, who had now ful-"filled the antient prædictions of his holy Pro-"phets, concerning the character of the Meſ-"ſiah, and the nature of his kingdom; which "were all verified by the death, the reſurrection, "and the aſcenſion of that ſame *Jeſus*, whom "they had crucified [1]." By the power of which ſpeech, he added about *three thouſand ſouls* at once to the number of the faithful; and exemplified the truth of what *St. Paul* has alſo teſtified, that it is better *to ſpeak five words in the Church with underſtanding, ſo as to inſtruct others by them, than ten thouſand in an unknown tongue* [2].

This account of *the gift of tongues*, drawn from the clear teſtimonies of Scripture, plainly ſhews; that it was not of a ſtable or permanent nature, but adapted to peculiar occaſions, and then withdrawn again, as ſoon as it had ſerved the particular purpoſe, for which it was beſtowed. And hence we ſee the vanity of that notion,

[1] Acts ii. 14,—41. [2] 1 Cor. xiv. 19.

which

which is generally entertained about it, that from the firſt communication of it to the Apoſtles, it adhered to them conſtantly as long as they lived, ſo as to inable them to preach the Goſpel to every nation, through which they travelled, in its own proper tongue. A notion, for which I cannot find the leaſt ground in any part of ſacred writ, but many ſolid reaſons to evince the contrary. Agreeably to which the learned *Salmaſius*, ſpeaking of this ſame miracle, ſays, "we are not to infer from it, that the "Apoſtles, by receiving the gift of tongues, re- "ceived a faculty of ſpeaking all the ſeveral lan- "guages, which are commonly uſed in the "world. For it is not probable, that the effect "of it continued beyond that very day, or any "longer, than *the cloven tongues* appeared to ſit "upon their heads: when thoſe vaniſhed, the "miracle ceaſed, and left them deſtitute of every "other language, but that of their native coun- "try: for he thinks it certain, that they were "not acquainted with any other, except what "they might afterwards imperfectly acquire by "natural means, as they found occaſion for "it[1]." This, though it be but little under-

[1] Nec dicendum eſt ex eo miraculo — donum linguarum ita accepiſſe Apoſtolos, ut deinceps omnia loquelarum genera — calluerint & uſurparint. Non enim veriſimile eſt ultra illum diem duraſſe vim illam, quam Spiritus Sanctus iis efflavit, tantiſper locum habituram, quamdiu linguæ igneæ ſupra caput cujuſque inſediſſe dicuntur. — Pro vero ſane tenendum eſt, omnes fere Chriſti diſcipulos & Apoſtolos — non aliam noviſſe linſtood,

ſtood, and will not perhaps be well reliſhed by the preſent pretenders to orthodoxy, is certainly the moſt probable account of the matter; which I ſhall now endeavour to illuſtrate, as briefly and clearly as I am able, through the remaining part of this Eſſay.

If the language, which the Apoſtles made uſe of in propagating the Goſpel by preaching or writing, had been inſpired into them by God, we ſhould expect ſurely to find it ſuch, as is worthy of God; pure, clear, noble, and affecting, even beyond the force of common ſpeech. *What man*, ſays *Cicero*, *is more flowing in his diction than Plato? Jupiter himſelf, the Philoſophers ſay, if he ſpeaks Greek, talks in the ſame manner* [2]. As they had no idea of any thing more excellent, ſo they imagined, that God himſelf would uſe the *Platonic* ſtyle; ſince nothing can come from him, but what is the moſt perfect in its kind: and this indeed is the univerſal ſenſe of mankind, and the ſole rule, which nature has given us, to diſtinguiſh the genuin productions of the Deity.

But if we try the Apoſtolic language by this rule, we ſhall be ſo far from aſcribing it to God, as to think it ſcarce worthy of man; I mean, of the liberal and the polite: for we ſhall find it in fact to be utterly rude and barbarous, and

gnam præter vernaculam, &c. Vid. Cl. Salmaſ. de Helleniſtica, p. 252, 253, 254.

[2] Quis uberior in dicendo Platone? Jovem quidem, aiunt Philoſophi, ſi Græce loquatur, ſic loqui. Cic. in Brut. p. 219. Edit. Lambin.

abounding

abounding with every fault, which can poſſibly deform a language. " If any one contends, " ſays *Eraſmus*, that the Apoſtles were inſpired " by God with the knowledge of all tongues, " and that this gift was perpetual in them; " ſince every thing, which is performed by a di- " vine power, is more perfect, according to *St.* " *Chryſoſtom*, than what is performed either in " the ordinary courſe of nature, or by the pains " of man, how comes it to paſs, that the lan- " guage of the Apoſtles is not onely rough and " unpoliſhed, but imperfect alſo and confuſed, " and ſometimes even plainly ſolœciſing or ab- " ſurd? for we cannot poſſibly deny, what the " fact itſelf declares to be true [1]."

It would be tedious, to enumerate all the particular imperfections which are charged to the ſacred ſtyle: whole books are written on the ſubject, and filled with the *barbariſms of the New Teſtament:* and though ſome writers alſo, on the other hand, prompted by a falſe zeal, have attempted to defend the *purity of ſcriptural Greek*, yet all, which they have been able to ſhew, is, that certain particular words and expreſſions are uſed there in the ſame ſenſe and with the ſame propriety, with which they are employed by the Claſſic writers: which is nothing more, than what is natural and neceſſary in all human compoſitions; that many words, even of the moſt elegant kind, ſhould be uſed in common, both by the worſt and the beſt authors, who

[1] Vid. Eraſm. Annotat. in Act. x. 38.

write

write in the ſame language. But it will be impoſſible to prove, that the order and conſtruction of thoſe words, and the general turn of the periods, which conſtitute, what we call the ſtyle, is not truly barbarous and corrupt, and wholly remote from the eaſe and ſweetneſs of the Claſſical compoſitions. Though "the whole diction "of the New Teſtament, ſays *Heinſius*, may "juſtly be called *Hebraiſtical*; yet we now and "then meet with a Greek expreſſion, of which "the beſt Greek writers would not be aſham-"ed [1]."

It is ſomewhat curious to obſerve, that there was a controverſy of the ſame kind among the antient Heathens, concerning the ſtyle and compoſition of the *Delphic oracles*. For as thoſe Oracles were delivered in verſe, and the verſes generally rude and harſh, and offending frequently, both in the exactneſs of meter and propriety of language, ſo men of ſenſe eaſily ſaw, *that they could not be inſpired by the Deity:* others, on the contrary, blinded by their prejudices, or urged by their zeal, to ſupport the credit of the popular ſuperſtition, conſtantly maintained, that the verſes were really beautiful, and noble, and worthy of God; and that the contrary opinion flowed from a falſe delicacy and ſickly taſte, which reliſhed no poetry, but what was ſoft and ſweet; and breathing nothing as it were but ſpices and perfumes. The diſpute however ſeems to have been compounded, and a diſtinc-

[1] Exercitat. in Nov. Teſtament.

tion

tion found, in which all parties acquieſced, by allowing ſome *ſort of inſpiration, and divine authority to the matter of the Oracle*, but leaving all the reſt, *to the proper talents and faculties of the Propheteſs* [1]: who being tired at laſt, with the continual labor of verſifying, began to utter her Oracles in proſe, till the whole impoſture fell by degrees into an univerſal contempt, and ſo finally expired [2].

We ſee the ſame prejudices ſtill operating in the true, as they did of old in thoſe falſe religions; and find many, who, not content with the allowed divinity of the Chriſtian doctrine, muſt needs have the language alſo, in which it is delivered, acknowledged as divine. But as men of this turn, prepoſſeſſed with ſyſtems, and ſtiff in opinions, are apt to truſt to any thing rather than their ſenſes; and to be moved by authorities rather than by facts; I ſhall offer a few teſtimonies from ſome of the principal of the Antient Fathers, as well as of the modern Critics, to confirm the truth of what I am here aſſerting.

As for the Antients, whatever ſort of inſpiration they aſcribed to the Apoſtles, they all allowed their language to have been intirely their own, and ſuch, as we naturally expect from ignorant men, in the loweſt ſtate of life.

[1] Vid. Plutar. De Pythia. Oper. T. ii. p. 396, &c. Edit. Par.

[2] Sed cur iſto modo jam Oracula Delphis non edun-

tur, non modo noſtra ætate, ſed jamdiu, jam ut nihil poſſit eſſe contemptius? Cic. De Div. l. ii.

Juſtin Martyr tells us, " that there went out " of *Jeruſalem*, to preach the Goſpel to the world, " twelve men onely; and thoſe wholly illiterate, " and without any ſkill or knowledge of lan- " guages [1]."

" The Apoſtles, ſays *Origen*, who were not " ignorant, in what part they were infirm and " deficient, declare themſelves to be *Idiots in* " *ſpeech*, but not in knowledge [2].—For if the " Scripture, ſays he, had been written with that " elegance and politeneſs of ſtyle, which was ad- " mired by the Greeks, it might have been " ſuſpected, that its ſucceſs was not owing to " the force of truth, but that men had been " caught and charmed by the flowing eaſe and " beauty of the language."

Euſebius ſays, " that the Apoſtles, though " perfectly pure in their lives, and adorned with " every virtue, were yet *rude and barbarous* in " ſpeech, and truſting to the miraculous powers " imparted to them by our Saviour, neither un- " derſtood nor attempted to recommend the " doctrines of their Maſter by any art or orna- " ments of language [3]."

St. Chryſoſtom, explaning the wonderful work of God, in converting the Gentile world, adds; " but by whom did he convert them? by eleven " men, illiterate, idiots, ineloquent, poor— " without any force of words or rhetoric, or

[1] Apolog. i. p. 59. Edit. Thirlb. 1722. [2] Comment. in Johan. p. 85, 86. Edit. Huet. & Philocal. c. iv.

[3] Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. iii. c. 24. p. 116. Edit. Cantab.

" Science,

" Science, to recommend them; but Fiſhermen " and Tent-makers, and of a ſtrange language. " For they did not ſpeak the ſame tongue with " thoſe, whom they perſuaded, but a foreign " one, and different from all others, I mean the " *Hebrew* [1]."

St. Jerom ſays, " that they were indued with " a power of working divers ſorts of miracles, " leſt no body ſhould otherwiſe believe a ſet of " ruſtic, unlearned, and ignorant men; want- " ing every ornament of ſpeech, to enforce their " promiſes of the kingdom of heaven [2]."

St. Auſtin alſo obſerves, " that Chriſt choſe " for his Apoſtles, men of mean birth, ignoble, " ignorant, and illiterate — and that the divinity " of their doctrine diſplayed itſelf the more il- " luſtriouſly, in convincing the world by ſuch " contemptible witneſſes; whoſe eloquence and " perſuaſive powers lay in their wonderful " works, not in their words [3]."

The modern Critics likewiſe and Interpreters generally affirm the ſame thing; not merely upon the authority of thoſe Antients, but from facts and inſtances, obſerved and collected by themſelves from the Apoſtolic writings [4].

Eraſmus tells us, " that when the Apoſtles

[1] Oper. Tom. i. p. 575, 576. Edit. Bened.

[2] Oper. Tom. iv. p. 35. Ed. Bened.

[3] Oper. Tom. vii. p. 659.

[4] Atque hanc de Apoſtolorum ſermone opinionem ipſa res nobis perſuadet, etiamſi non ſuffragaretur ſummorum virorum auctoritas. In Act. x. 38.

" write

"write in Greek, they borrow much from their "own Hebrew; as at this day, men of little "learning, when they talk Latin, always mix "ſomewhat with it of their native tongue. "For they did not learn their Greek from the "orations of *Demoſthenes*, but from their con- "verſation with the vulgar; ſo it ſeemed good "to the divine wiſdom, to uſe no help of human "eloquence, towards drawing the world into his "religion: nor was *the gift of tongues deſigned to "be perpetual*: it was ſufficient, that it was be- "ſtowed, as oft as occaſion required [1]."

Druſius and *Heinſius*, in their controverſy with *Salmaſius*, about the *Helleniſtic Dialect* of the New Teſtament, declare it to be *barbarous and impure, conſiſting indeed of Greek words, but full of Syriaſms, and Hebraiſms* [2]. *Salmaſius* on the other hand, though he allows no ſuch dialect, as that, which they call *Helleniſtic*, yet gives the ſame character of the ſtyle of the ſacred books, "that it was a ſort of Greek, compounded of "various barbariſms; of *Latiniſms*, *Hebraiſms*, "*Syriaſms*, *and Macedoniciſms*; had many words "in it, that were not Greek, many *Alexandrian* "and *Latin*, more ſtill merely barbarous, *and* "*numberleſs phraſes from the Hebrew and the* "*Syriac* [3]."

[1] Eraſm. ibid.

[2] Vid. Funus Ling. Helleniſt. p. 11, 12.

[3] Ibid. p. 42.

N. B. Thoſe, who would ſee this point more fully treated, may conſult *Father Simon's* Critical Hiſtory of the New Teſtament, where he will find many more au-

Theſe teſtimonies ſhew, what was the ſenſe both of the antients and the moderns, concerning the general language of the New Teſtament; I ſhall procede therefore to open briefly in the next place, what has been obſerved and declared alſo by them, concerning the particular ſtyle and ſkill in languages of each ſingle Apoſtle or writer of thoſe ſacred books.

St. Matthew is ſaid to have publiſhed his Goſpel the firſt of them, and in *the Hebrew tongue*, for the proper benefit of his countrymen [1]. But we may probably ſuppoſe, that the reaſon of his chuſing to write in that language, was his ignorance, or imperfect knowledge of the Greek. For the Greek tongue being then the common language of *Aſia*, and even of *Judæa* itſelf, while the *Hebrew* was confined in a manner to the walls of *Jeruſalem*, an Hiſtory, compiled in *Hebrew*, could be of no great ſervice, in ſpreading the light of the Goſpel, till it was tranſlated into ſome other tongue of more general uſe. This therefore was the real caſe of this *Hebrew* Goſpel; which was ſcarce ſooner publiſhed, than tranſlated into Greek by an unknown hand, and the *Hebrew* copy thrown aſide, and within a few ages after quite loſt [2].

thorities collected on the ſame ſubject.

[1] Primus omnium Matthæus eſt Publicanus — qui Evangelium in Judæa Hebræo ſermone edidit; ob eorum vel maxime cauſam, qui in Jeſum crediderant ex Judæis. Hieron. Op. T. iv. p. 3.

[2] Quod quis poſtea in Græcum tranſtulerit, non ſa-

St.

St. Mark, though diſtinguiſhed by a *Roman* name, was yet a Jew; and, according to *Grotius*, *was better acquainted with the Hebrew, than the Greek, in which he wrote, yet moderately ſkilled in them both, as his diction plainly ſhews* [1].

St. Luke, was a Phyſician of *Antioch*, and having had on that account a more liberal education than the reſt, is obſerved to have written with more elegance and propriety. But it is probable, that he underſtood little or nothing of the *Hebrew*; ſince he conſtantly draws his citations of the Old Teſtament from the *Septuagint Verſion*, which *St. Jerom* ſeems to aſcribe to his *want of ſkill in the Hebrew* [2]. *But this excuſe*, as *Eraſmus* ſays, *will hardly ſatisfy thoſe who believe every thing, that belonged to the Apoſtles, to have been beſtowed on them by the Holy Ghoſt, and eſpecially the gift of tongues* [3].

St. John, as both the antients and the moderns with one voice declare, was, of all the Apoſtles,

tis certum eſt. Ibid. par. ii. p. 102.

[1] Judæum fuiſſe, & ἑβραϊζοντα magis quam ἑλληνιζοντα, quanquam ſermonis utriuſque mediocriter verſatum, locutio evincit. Grot. in Marc. i.

[2] Evangeliſtam Lucam tradunt veteris Eccleſiæ tractatores, medicæ artis fuiſſe ſcientiſſimum, & magis Græcas litteras ſciſſe quam Hebræas. Unde & ſermo ejus —comptior eſt. Hieron. T. iii. p. 63, 64.

[3] Nam Lucam excuſat Hieronymus, haud ſcio quam commode, quod magis calluerit Græcas litteras quam Hebraicas.— Hanc excuſationem non admittent, opinor, qui quicquid in Apoſtolis fuit, divini Spiritus peculiare donum eſſe volunt; præcipue donum linguarum. In Matth. xiii. 14.

the moſt barbarous in his language, and ignorant of letters: "Being the ſon of a Fiſherman, "and himſelf alſo of the ſame trade, he might "learn the law when a child, ſays *Grotius*, as it "was the cuſtom with the Jews, but had no "ſort of tincture, either of the Hebrew or "Greek literature; and his Greek ſtyle is plainly formed after the *Syriac* idiom of that "age [1]."

St. *Paul*, the moſt eloquent of all the Apoſtles, and, as he declares of himſelf, indued alſo with *the gift of tongues more eminently than any man* [2]; yet, as ſome of the Ancient Fathers teſtify, was either wholly ignorant, or but very moderately ſkilled, in the *Greek*.

St. *Jerom*, ſpeaking of *a certain perſon of diſtinguiſhed learning*, who affirmed him *to have been wholly unacquainted with it*, ſeems to cenſure that opinion as *ridiculous:* yet he himſelf, on other occaſions, does not ſcruple to paſs the ſame judgement upon him. "I ſtill approve, "ſays he, what I have often ſaid before, that when "*Paul* declares himſelf to be rude in ſpeech, he "does not declare it out of any humility, but "from the real ſenſe and conſciouſneſs of his "own mind. For being an *Hebrew of the He-*

[1] Johannes Bethſaidenſis, Piſcatoris filius, piſcator & ipſe; legem quidem diſcere potuit puer, ut mos erat Hebræis, ceterum nulla tinctus fuit aut Hebraica aut Græca literatura— Hinc fit, ut ſupra ceteros Apoſtolos magna ſit in Johannis dictione ſimplicitas, & ſermo Græcus quidem, ſed plane adumbratus ex Syriaco illius ſeculi.—Grot. in Johan. c. i.

[2] 1 Cor. xiv. 18.

" *brews*, and moſt eloquent in his own tongue, " he could not expreſs the recondite ſenſes of " the Goſpel in a foreign language." In other places he takes notice of the *ſolœciſms and blunders* which this Apoſtle was apt to make in the conſtruction of his words and ſentences; " and " how he employed *Titus*, as *his interpreter of the* " Greek *tongue*, to aſſiſt him in writing his epi- " ſtles:" for which reaſon, we find him extremely grieved and not able *to take any reſt*, while *Titus* was abſent from him; but filled again with joy and comfort, though in the midſt of tribulations, when he met with *Titus* again in *Macedonia*, whither he went to ſeek him; *being the pipe and organ*, as *Jerom* expreſſes it, through *which he preached the Goſpel and ſung to Chriſt* [1].

[1] Vir apprime noſtris temporibus eruditus, miror quomodo rem ridiculam locutus ſit. —*Paulus*, inquit, *Hebræus erat, & Græcas litteras neſciebat*. Hieron. Tom. iv. par. i. 315.

Illud quod crebro diximus, *Et ſi imperitus ſermone, non tamen ſcientia*, nequaquam *Paulum* de humilitate, ſed de conſcientiæ veritate dixiſſe, etiam nunc approbamus, &c. Ibid. p. 204.

Iſte igitur, qui Solœciſmos in verbis facit, qui non poteſt hyperbaton reddere, ſententiamque concludere, audacter ſibi vendicat ſapientiam. Ibid. p. 348.

Hebræus igitur ex Hebræis, qui eſſet in vernaculo ſermone doctiſſimus, profundos ſenſus aliena lingua exprimere non valebat. Ib. p. 309, 409.

Habebat ergo *Titum* interpretem. — Ergo contriſtatur Paulus, quia prædicationis ſuæ in præſentiarum fiſtulam, organumque per quod Chriſto caneret, non invenerat: perrexitque in *Macedoniam*, ut ibi inveniret *Titum*, &c. Ib. p. 183. See 2 Cor. ii. 13. vii. 5, 6.

Hence in his Epiſtles, through a want of uſe and ſkill in writing Greek, it was his cuſtom to ſcratch out the *laſt clauſe onely, or ſalutation, in his own hand*, as the mark of their being genuin: thus in the Epiſtle to the *Galatians*; *See*, ſays he, *with what huge letters I have written this, with my own hand.* Which we are not to underſtand, according to St. *Jerom*, as if he had written *the whole Epiſtle* himſelf, but *that ſmall part onely which follows* [1]; and which thoſe ancients ſeem to interpret, as if he had ſaid, *ſee with what deformed and aukward letters I have ſcrawled out this ſubſcription, that from this attempt to do, what I am not able to execute without difficulty, you may collect the greatneſs of my zeal and love for you* [2].

In writing alſo to *the Romans*, he made uſe of *Tertius*, as his ſcribe, to draw up the Epiſtle for him: whom the learned take to be the ſame with that *Silas*, ſo frequently mentioned in the Acts, as his companion and attendant; who, writing here to the *Romans*, uſes his *Latin* name, *Tertius*, of the ſame import and interpretation,

[1] Et ne aliqua ſuppoſitæ Epiſtolæ ſuſpicio naſceretur, ab hoc loco uſque ad finem, manu ſua ipſe perſcripſit, oſtendens ſuperiora ab alio exarata. Ibid. p. 314.

[2] Et quia neceſſitas expetebat, ut manu ſua Epiſtolam ſubſcriberet, contra conſuetudinem curvos tramites literarum, vix magnis apicibus exprimebat: etiam in hoc, ſuæ ad Galatas indicia caritatis oſtendens, quod propter illos, id quoque, quod non poterat, facere conaretur. Ib. p. 315.

with

with his *Hebrew* name, שלוש [1]. But ſome are apt to inquire, why St. *Paul*, in an Epiſtle to the *Romans*, ſhould chuſe to write in *Greek*, rather than in *Latin*; to whom *Grotius* gives this anſwer: "becauſe both the Apoſtle and his Se-"cretary, tho' not perhaps wholly ignorant of "the *Latin*, were yet better qualified, the one "to dictate, and the other to write in *Greek* [2]." But whatever ſmattering either of them might poſſibly have of the *Latin*, it is certain, that they were both but ſlenderly acquainted with the *Greek*, as this very epiſtle demonſtrates; which in the judgement both of the ancients and the moderns, is ſtrangely obſcure and perplexed; abounding with *hyperbatons*; and employing the ſame words in various ſenſes; and borrowing ſeveral of them from *the peculiar dialect of Cilicia* [3].

St. *Peter* alſo is ſaid to have had his ſcribes as well as St. *Paul*, and in particular, to have employed *Mark the Evangeliſt*, as his *Greek* interpreter; and St. *Jerom* aſcribes *that difference of ſtyle*, which is obſerved *between his two epiſtles*, *to*

[1] Vid. Lightfoot, Horæ Hebraic. p. 883. in Cor. i. 1.

[2] Credo id eo factum, quod & ipſe & Scriba ejus, *Tertius*, nomine, quanquam fortaſſe Latinii ſermonis non prorſus ignari, Græce tamen rectius ille dictaret, hic ſcriberet. In Rom. i. 1.

[3] Queritur *Origenes*, hanc interpretans Epiſtolam, Græcam dictionem eſſe perplexam, & hyperbatis obſcuratam, & e Cilicum idiomate quædam parum Græca peregrinitatem reſipere. Eraſm. in Rom. i. 7. Vid. Origen. Comment. p. 429. Edit. Huet. It. Hieron. T. iv. par. i. p. 180.

the different ſecretaries, whom he happened to uſe for each of them [1]. And this is ſuppoſed to have been the caſe of all the other Apoſtles: "for being all of them, ſays *Salmaſius*, *Galilæans* "and *Hebrews*, they had each their ſeveral com- "panions and aſſociates in the miniſtry of "preaching the Goſpel: who were partly *Gre-* "*cians* born in *Syria*, and acquainted therefore "with the *Syriac*; and partly *Syrians*, who, by "converſing with the *Grecians*, had acquired "the uſe alſo of the *Greek* tongue. Theſe they "employed as interpreters, to tranſlate into "*Greek*, what they dictated to them in the *He-* "*brew* or *Syriac*.——This, adds he, is expreſly "declared of ſome; not ſo well known of "others, becauſe not ſo declared; but probable "of them all, becauſe certain of ſome of them. "—Hence all thoſe *Syriaſms*, which are ſpread "over the whole text of the New Teſtament, "and bear the clear marks of a tranſlation, "made, as it were, word for word [2]."

I ſhall onely add to theſe teſtimonies, a paſſage from St. *Chryſoſtom*, very appoſite to the preſent purpoſe; in which that Father tells us, "how he once happened to hear a ridiculous "diſpute between *a Greek and a Chriſtian*, on

[1] Denique et duæ Epiſtolæ, quæ feruntur *Petri*, ſtylo inter ſe & charactere diſcrepant, ſtructuraque verborum. Ex quo intelligimus, pro neceſſitate rerum, diverſis eum uſum interpretibus. Hier. ib. p. 183.

[2] Vid. Salmaſ. Comment. de Helleniſt. p. 256, 258.

"this

" this very ſubject—the *Greek* maintained, that " *Paul* was utterly illiterate: the Chriſtian, on " the other hand, was ſimple enough to affirm, " that he was more eloquent even than *Plato*. " By which they, each of them, ſeverally, hurt " their own cauſe. For if *Paul* was really the " more learned of the two, the wonder would " preſently ceaſe, how he came to get the better " of *Plato*, and to draw all his followers to " himſelf; ſince it would appear to be owing " to the ſuperiority of his talents, not to the " divine grace: whereas if *Paul*, illiterate as he " was, could vanquiſh the learned *Plato*, ſuch a " victory was glorious, and the hand of God " manifeſt in it. Wherefore he exhorts the " Chriſtians, whenever they heard any of the " *Greeks* contemning the learning of the Apo- " ſtles, to depreciate it ſtill more, and inſtead " of extolling the wiſdom of *Paul*, to extoll ra- " ther all thoſe, who were admired among the " Gentiles, for their learning and eloquence; " and to declare their own Apoſtles at the ſame " time, to be *barbarous and unlearned*; for that " was the onely way to confound their adver- " ſaries in the end, and gain a noble victory " over them [1]."

Theſe facts and authorities manifeſtly prove, that the gift of tongues was not of a laſting or perpetual kind, but given onely on certain important occaſions, as an *illuſtrious ſign*, to thoſe firſt preachers of the Goſpel, that a divine power

[1] Vid. Chryſoſt. Op. T. iii. p. 76.

continued

continued to accompany them, and crowned their labors with ſucceſs; and when this particular end was ſerved, the gift itſelf was preſently withdrawn. The ſame facts alſo demonſtrate, that the languages, which the Apoſtles and Evangeliſts afterwards uſed, as well in their ſeveral writings, as in preaching the Goſpel to foreign nations, were not the fruit of this gift, or of divine inſpiration, but merely ſuch as they had been taught to ſpeak from their birth, or had acquired by practice and converſation with thoſe, among whom they reſided: and that we may ſay with great truth of every one of them, what was ſaid in particular of St. *Peter*, *Thou art ſurely a Galilæan, for thy ſpeech bewrayeth thee* [1].

Since the Apoſtles then cannot be ſuppoſed to have received their language from heaven; it will be aſked perhaps, by what human means they could acquire that knowledge of the *Greek*, of which they appear to have been poſſeſſed. But this will admit a very eaſy ſolution, if we recollect, what all the learned allow, that the *Greek* language prevailed and floriſhed in common uſe, through the greateſt part of the eaſtern world. *The* Latin *tongue is confined indeed within narrow bounds*, ſays *Cicero*, *but the* Greek *is read almoſt by all nations* [2]. Hence flowed that cuſtom, ſo common with the ſacred writers, of dividing all mankind into *Jews* and *Greeks* [3].

[1] Matt. xxvi. 73. [2] Orat. pro Archia. [3] Acts xiv. 1. xviii. 4. xix. 10, &c.

But

But what is moſt to our purpoſe, we find the *Greek* tongue to have been generally current alſo in *Judæa*, and in the city of *Jeruſalem* itſelf; in which there ſeem to have been ſeveral *Greek Synagogues* [1]. The province of *Galilee* alſo was divided between the *Jews* and the *Greeks*; and *Capernaum* the Metropolis was in the *Grecian* diviſion [2]. The city of *Gadara* too, where *Jeſus* ſent *the Legion of Devils into the Swine*, and *Cana* likewiſe, where he wrought his firſt miracle, were under the ſame juriſdiction [3].

Now it was in theſe very parts where our Saviour principally reſided, and gathered all his Apoſtles: two of whom have *Grecian* names, *Philip* and *Andrew*, and a third, two different names, *Thomas* and *Didymus*, the one *Hebrew*, the other *Greek*; by the firſt of which he was called among the Jews, by the ſecond among the Gentiles [4]. It is certain alſo, that in *Jeruſalem*, a great number of the firſt converts were *Greeks:* inſomuch that the Apoſtles found it neceſſary, to ſelect *ſeven of the moſt eminent Diſciples*, to be ſet apart for the particular buſineſs of providing for the maintenance of the *Grecian widows*. *And they choſe* Stephen, *a man full of*

[1] Acts vi. 9. Vid. Lightfoot, p. 929.

[2] Galilæa Gentium—in qua eſt *Capernaum* Galilææ Metropolis. Zeger. in Johan. iv. 43, 44.

[3] Eſt enim *Cana*, in Galilæa Gentium, oppidum, quod *Hieronymus* in *Hebraicis locis* teſtatur ætate ſua adhuc extitiſſe. Eraſm. in Joh. ii. 1. De Gadara. Vid. Sculteti Exercitat. Evangel. l. ii. c. 49.

[4] John xi. 16.

faith,

faith, and of the Holy Ghoſt, and Philip, *and* Prochorus, *and* Nicanor, *and* Timon, *and* Parmenas, *and* Nicolas *a proſelyte of* Antioch [1]. Where it is remarkable, that all the ſeven have *Grecian* names, and were conſequently of *Grecian* families: and as the laſt of them is particularly diſtinguiſhed by the character of *a proſelyte of* Antioch, ſo it is probable, that the reſt were natives of *Jeruſalem:* to whom we may add *Nicodemus*, a perſon of ſenatorian rank, and a member of the great *Sanhedrim*, yet, as we may collect from his name, of *Greek* extraction alſo [2]. From all which we ſee the reaſon, of what the learned Dr. *Lightfoot* declares, "that the *Greek* lan-"guage was in ſuch uſe and honor with the "Jewiſh nation, that it was preferred to all "others, and held by the Doctors themſelves, "in the ſame rank with their native tongue [3]."

To conclude then: it is reaſonable to imagine, that the Apoſtles, who were born and bred, and ſpent their whole lives among thoſe who *ſpoke Greek*, might acquire a moderate knowledge of that tongue, even from their childhood. For this is natural and common to the moſt illiterate, to catch ſome imperfect uſe of a foreign language, which they hear conſtantly ſpoken by all around them. But if we ſuppoſe them to have made but little or no acquaintance with it, in their younger years, it is probable, that the neceſſities of their Apoſtolic function,

[1] Acts vi. 5. [2] John iii. 1. [3] Lightf. Hor. Hebr. in Matt. i. p. 253. It. Chron. Tempor. p. 110.

and

and the taſk of preaching the Goſpel, might induce them to apply themſelves to the acquiſition of it, even in their advanced life. This I find to have been the opinion of *Eraſmus*, who ſays, "It is not ſtrange, that when *Ægypt*, *Syria*, *Cilicia*, and all the leſſer *Aſia* talked *Greek*, "the Apoſtles ſhould acquire the knowledge "of it without a miracle, when they lived ſo "many years among thoſe who ſpoke it. Nor "were the Goſpels preſently written by them. "A ſtranger, who lives in *France*, will learn to "ſpeak *French* in a year's time, though he "knew nothing of it before: and can we wonder then, that the Apoſtles, in ſo many "years, ſhould gain a moderate ſkill in the "*Greek* [1]?"

Salmaſius alſo was of the ſame opinion, that the greateſt part of the Apoſtles learnt the *Greek* tongue but very late; and not till they were commanded to preach the Goſpel to all nations [2]. *Grotius* likewiſe declares in particular of St. *John*, "that he had no tincture either "of the *Hebrew* or *Greek* literature, but might "perhaps have gained ſome ſhare of each, when "he was old, in *Aſia*, where he ſpent the greateſt part of his days, to an extreme age; partly in the *Iſle of Patmos*, to which he was baniſhed, and partly at *Epheſus*, both before "and after his baniſhment, as all the ancients "teſtify."

This opinion therefore of thoſe great and

[1] Eraſm. in Acts x. 38. [2] Grot. in Joh. i. 1.

learned

SOME SHORT

REMARKS

ON A

STORY told by the ANCIENTS, etc.

THE ſtory, which I am going to examine, is told by *Irenæus* in the following manner; "That there were ſome, "who had heard *Polycarp* relate, how *St. John*, "the diſciple of our Lord, going one day to "the public bath in *Epheſus*, and finding the "Heretic *Cerinthus* in it, ſtarted back inſtantly "without bathing, crying out; Let us run away, "leſt the bath ſhould fall upon us, while *Cerin-* "*thus*, the enemy of truth, is in it [1]."

This ſtory is applied by *Dr. Berriman*, in one of his Sermons, to inforce the duty of *ſhunning Infidels and Heretics:* and by *Dr. Waterland*, to recommend a practice, which he warmly preſſes upon all Chriſtians, of rejecting from their ſociety and communion, *all the impugners of fundamentals* [2]: And it is ſure to be thrown in our way, either from the pulpit or the preſs, by all

[1] Καὶ ἔτι εἰσὶν οἱ ἀκηκοότες αὐτοῦ, ὅτι Ἰωάννης, &c. Iren. l. iii. c. 3.

[2] See Dr. *Waterl.* Import. of the Doctr. of the Trin. p. 105, 127. it. *Berrim.* On ſhunning Heret. p. 352.

angry Divines, as oft as they find occaſion, to inflame the people againſt an Antagoniſt, whom, through zeal or heat of controverſy, they are diſpoſed to treat as an adverſary to the Chriſtian faith.

Since this ſtory then, as it is commonly applied, naturally tends, to excite prejudices, and uncharitable averſions in the minds of men, and is conſidered generally by zealots, as an Apoſtolic rule and precedent, for the exerciſe of all kinds of rudeneſs towards thoſe, who differ from them in matters of religion, I cannot but think it of uſe to the public quiet, to inquire into the real ſtate of it, and not to ſuffer it to have any other credit or influence, than what is ſtrictly due to it: for in that great uncharitableneſs, which reigns among all the Sects of Chriſtians in theſe days, there is no occaſion to ranſack antiquity, for any additional motives of ſtrife and mutual hatred.—I ſhall conſider therefore,

1ſt, What objections may reaſonably be offered to the truth of it, as well from the nature of the evidence, as the matter of the ſtory itſelf.

2dly, Shall ſhew, that though we allow it to be true, it cannot juſtify the uſe, to which the Doctors abovementioned, and many others have applied it.

1. As to the evidence of the ſtory, it reſts on the ſingle teſtimony of *Irenæus*, and that given to us, at ſecond hand onely, or from hearſay: for he does not ſay, that he received it himſelf from *Polycarp*, though when young he had ſeen and converſed

converſed with him, but that *ſome of Polycarp's diſciples* had heard him relate it; of which number there were many, who had converſed with him more familiarly, and frequently than *Irenæus*. Since he received it then from certain perſons unknown, who received it from *Polycarp*, who received it from *St. John*, there is room enough to ſuppoſe, that he might poſſibly be deceived in it: which, conſidering the character of the man, and of the age wherein he lived, can hardly be thought an unreaſonable ſuppoſition.

But if we ſhould allow, what many are apt to infer from this paſſage, that *Irenæus* meant here to ſignify that it was he himſelf, who heard the ſtory from *Polycarp*; we are then to conſider, what degree of credit may be due to his teſtimony. But this I have already conſidered at large in a former treatiſe: in which I have ſhewn, that though of all the Fathers, whoſe works now remain to us, he was the moſt diligent collector of *Apoſtolic traditions*, and had gathered them, as he affirms, *from the mouths of antient men, who had converſed with the Apoſtles themſelves*; yet in every ſingle inſtance of them, which he has particularly recorded, and peremptorily atteſted, he was either deluded himſelf, or has willfully deluded others, by a falſe and forged pretence of Apoſtolic authority. Among many examples, which I have there produced in the ſupport of this charge, the following one will ſufficiently teach us, how far we may depend upon his fidelity.

There were certain Heretics in thoſe days, with whom *Irenæus* was diſputing, who allowed but *one and thirty years* to our Saviour's life, and the *laſt of them alone* to his miniſtry: in contradiction to whom, *Irenæus* roundly affirms, *that our Saviour actually lived to an old age, and was fifty years old at leaſt at the time of his death:* for which he alledges *the unanimous teſtimony of all the old men, who had lived with St. John in Aſia, and received this account from him*; *ſome of whom*, he ſays, *had ſeen the other Apoſtles alſo, and heard the ſame from them all, and bore witneſs accordingly to the truth of it* [1]. Now it is not poſſible, that any tradition can be more authentically delivered than this, by one of the moſt venerable Biſhops of the primitive Church, who lived within a few years after the Apoſtles themſelves; yet it is certain, as the warmeſt admirers of antiquity in general, and of *Irenæus* in particular, muſt own, that neither *St. John*, nor any other of the Apoſtles, could ever declare ſuch a ſtory to any one; and that the whole therefore muſt be a mere fiction, either of thoſe antient men, who had converſed with the Apoſtles, or of *Irenæus* himſelf, who pretended to have heard it from them, as being utterly inconſiſtent with the hiſtory of the Goſpel.

But the Goſpel was then onely in a few hands;

[1] Iren. l. ii. c. 39. Quidam autem eorum non ſolum Joannem, ſed & alios Apoſtolos viderunt, & hæc eadem ab ipſis audierunt & teſtantur de hujuſmodi relatione.

and

and *Apoſtolic tradition* the ſhorteſt way of ſilencing thoſe Heretics; being an argument of the greateſt weight with thoſe, who believed it, and what could not eaſily be confuted by thoſe, who did not. The pious Editor of *Irenæus's* works makes the following remark upon the place; "*Irenæus*, ſays he, affirms in expreſs words, that "Chriſt continued to teach beyond *the fortieth*, "or even *the fiftieth year of his age*; which he "endeavours to confirm by texts of Scripture, "and by reaſons alſo, though weak ones, which "the common judgement of the Church has re-"jected. We ought however to judge can-"didly of the bleſſed Martyr, who, *by an im-"petus of confuting the Heretics*, was carried into "the contrary extreme: a caſe, which, as "it is manifeſt, has frequently happened to "the moſt holy and learned men [1]." But ſince *Irenæus's* whole life and writings were peculiarly devoted to the confutation of Hereſy, what is it, that the moſt candid can poſſibly judge on this occaſion, but that the ſame *impetus of confuting them*, which carried him beyond the truth in one caſe, would carry him the ſame length in another, and prompt him to uſe every argument, which could promote ſo good a cauſe?

This ſuſpicion will be confirmed, not onely by the conduct of *Irenæus* in other ſimilar caſes,

[1] Diſertis verbis affirmat Chriſtum ultra quadrageſimum, aut etiam quinquageſimum annum docuiſſe, &c. Vid. Fevardent. Not. 4. in Iren. ibid.

but by the matter of the ſtory itſelf, which on many accounts ſeems to imply a behaviour unworthy of the character of *an Apoſtle*; to whoſe dignity it would have been more agreeable, inſtead of running out of the Bath himſelf, to have driven *Cerinthus* out before him. *Reſiſt the Devil and he will flee*, is an injunction given to every private Chriſtian: and it is much more the part of an Apoſtle, to reſiſt and diſarm an Heretic; whereas ſo precipitate a flight betrays fear and diffidence, and gives an occaſion of triumph to the Adverſary.

The reaſon alſo, ſaid to be given by him for his flight, is childiſh and ſuperſtitious: *leſt the bath ſhould fall, becauſe Cerinthus was in it.* As if it had been uſual with God, to exert his judgements in that manner on notorious ſinners, by burying them under the ruins of walls and houſes: a notion, which ſeems to be expreſly diſcouraged and exploded by Chriſt himſelf [1]. Or, if there was any cauſe to apprehend, that God would take ſo extraordinary a method of puniſhing the Heretic, there was a greater ſtill, to be aſſured, that he would provide at the ſame time, in ſome way as extraordinary, for the ſafety of the Apoſtle: it being weak to imagine, that when he had ſpared the life of ſo profligate an enemy to that day, he ſhould be in ſuch haſte at laſt to deſtroy him, as to involve his old and faithful ſervant in the ſame ruin.

[1] Luke xiii. 1.

The

The conduct of the other Apoſtles towards the profeſs'd adverſaries of the Goſpel was quite contrary to this of *St. John*, as we find it deſcribed in the Hiſtory of their Acts; where we read how *Peter* rebuked and confounded the Prince and Leader of all Heretics, *Simon Magus*, who had bewitched the people of *Samaria*, by his Sorceries, and was revered by them as a Deity. And if any credit be due to Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, we are there told, that when the ſame *Simon* was playing his magical tricks again in *Rome*, in defiance and oppoſition to the Goſpel, and, by the help of his familiar Dæmons, was flying briſkly in the air, *St. Peter*, by the force of his prayers, brought him down from the ſky, with ſo precipitate a tumble, that he was daſhed to pieces by the fall, in the ſight of all the people. Thus, when *St. Paul* likewiſe was oppoſed and obſtructed in preaching the Goſpel, by another Sorcerer and falſe Prophet, called *Elymas*, he firſt reproached him ſharply for his Diabolical practices, and then, *in the name of the Lord, ſtruck him inſtantly blind.* And this is the conduct, which one would have expected from an Apoſtle, upon an encounter with *Cerinthus*, the chief Heretic and adverſary of the Goſpel then living, that he would either have confuted and put him to ſhame by the force of his reaſoning, or confounded him by ſome act of that extraordinary power, with which he was indued from above.

But *St. John*, as *Dr. Waterland* declares, *was all love, meekneſs, and charity* [1]: and this indeed is ſaid to have been his peculiar character, above that of the other Apoſtles. And we are told of him by *St. Jerom*, "that in his extreme "age, when he uſed to be carried to the Church "by his diſciples, it was his cuſtom, to do no "thing more, than repeat this ſingle exhorta"tion; *My little children, love one another*: and "when the people grew tired with hearing no"thing elſe from him but that one precept, and "aſked, why he continued always to repeat the "ſame thing; he anſwered; *It is a ſaying worthy* "*of John, and a precept of our Lord, and if you* "*practiſe this alone, it is ſufficient* [2]." The ſame doctrine, of love, charity, and mutual benevolence, was eminently propagated alſo by his two principal Scholars, *Ignatius*, and *Polycarp*: *What thanks are due to you*, ſays *Ignatius*, *if you love onely the good diſciples? you muſt ſubdue rather the more peſtilent ſort, by your mildneſs and gentleneſs* [3]. And *Polycarp* ſpeaking of one, who had fallen away from the faith, ſays; *Be moderate on this occaſion, and look not on ſuch as enemies, but call them back, as ſuffering and erring members* [4].

[1] See Import. of the Doctr. of the Trin. p. 152.

[2] Nihil aliud per ſingulas ſolebat proferre collectas, niſi hoc, *Filioli, diligite alterutrum*, &c. Hieron. Op. T. iv p. 314.

[3] Vid. Ignat. Ep. ad Polycarp. § 11.

[4] Vid. Polycarp. Ep. ad Philip. § 11.

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How much more amiable then, and agreeably to his proper character, is this ſame Apoſtle repreſented in another ſtory, delivered alſo by the antients, concerning his painful and affectionate purſuit, of the *Captain of a band of robbers*; whom he followed into the mountains, and by his affectionate and paternal remonſtrances, brought back from the head of his crew, and reſtored to the Church [1]? yet from this charitable and benevolent act, *Dr. Waterland* has contrived to draw a moſt perverſe and pernicious inference, *that by flying from the Heretic and running after the robber, he ſhewed, how much more he deteſted Hereſies, than common immoralities* [2].

It is obſervable likewiſe, that this ſtory is related with no ſmall variation by the Antients themſelves. *Epiphanius* tells it more than once, not of *Cerinthus*, but of another Hæretic, called *Ebion:* and *why might not both of them*, ſays the Editor of *Irenæus, be found together in the bath at the ſame time? Baronius* makes the ſame ſuppoſition, to reconcile the two Fathers; while others ſuppoſe, that *Cerinthus* and *Ebion* are but different names of the ſame perſon [3]: Yet *Tertullian* expreſly diſtinguiſhes them, and calls *Ebion the Succeſſor of Cerinthus* [4]. But *Mr. Tillemont* ſolves the matter more judiciouſly by remarking, that there is no need of ſuch con-

[1] Vid. Euſeb. Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. iii. c. 23. [2] See *Waterl.* ibid p. 152. [3] Vid. Fevardent. Not. 2. in Iren. ibid. & Baron. ad Ann. 74. [4] Vid. Oper. p. 252. B.

jectures,

jectures, becauſe it is common with *Epiphanius* to make blunders in hiſtory; *who has added*, he ſays, *ſeveral other particulars, both trifling and improbable, to this very ſtory.* One of the particulars, which he has added, is this; *That St. John had never before made uſe of the public baths, till he was ſent thither on this occaſion by a divine inſpiration, to give this open teſtimony of his deteſtation of Hereſy.* Some of the other Fathers as well as *Epiphanius*, declare *Cerinthus to have been the diſciple of Carpocrates*, who was not in being, as the Chronologers tell us, till *after the death of St. John*; and if ſo, this whole ſtory muſt of courſe fall the ground.

The Moderns alſo, in their turn, have added ſome embelliſhments to the ſame ſtory. *Fevardentius*, in his notes on this paſſage of *Irenæus*, ſays, that *St. Jerom*, in his treatiſe againſt the *Luciferians* affirms, *that immediately after the retreat of St. John, the bath actually fell down and cruſhed Cerinthus to death.* Yet there is not the leaſt intimation of any ſuch fact, as *Dr. Grabe* obſerves, either in that, or any other part of *St. Jerom's* works [1]. Another writer with as little truth, aſſerts the ſame thing, on the authority of venerable *Bede*; and ſome alſo appeal to *Polycarp*, as the voucher of it; and all of them take occaſion, to moralize upon it with great gravity, as an inſtance of God's judgement upon Hæretics [2].

[1] Vid. Iren. Oper. Edit. Oxon. p. 204. Not. 2.

[2] *Monſr. Bayle*, who mentions this ſtory with all

From

From theſe remarks upon the ſtory, I ſhall procede to the leſſon, which is drawn from it by the two Doctors above mentioned, and ſhew,

2dly, That, though we allow the fact to be true, it will not juſtify the uſe, to which they have applied it.

Now the conſtant uſe, which is made of this ſtory, is to demonſtrate the duty *of ſhunning and affronting Hæretics; of denying them the common offices of civility; treating them as perſons excommunicated, and deteſtable in the eyes of God and*

theſe particulars, makes the following remark upon it. "Obſerve, ſays he, the progreſs of it. *Irenæus* was "probably the firſt who "publiſhed it, and contented himſelf with relating "barely, what he had heard. "But thoſe, who came after "him, finding his narrative "too ſimple and naked, added ſome embroidery to "it. They fancied it diſ"honourable to the memory "of the Apoſtle, to have it "believed, that he had ever "made uſe of the public "baths: they affirmed there"fore, that he had never "done it before, and was "ſent thither on this occa"ſion, by the expreſs com"mand of heaven. It was "neceſſary in the next place, "to find out a good reaſon "for ſo particular an inſpi"ration: and a reaſon was "preſently found; viz. the "importance of letting the "faithful know, what an "horror they all ought to "conceive againſt the ene"mies of the truth; and "how the divine juſtice was "always ready to exert itſelf "by ſome exemplary ſeve"rity againſt an Arch-He"retic. Laſtly, as it might "ſeem indecent, for *St. John* to be thought liable "to any vain and unneceſ"ſary fear, ſo it was found "convenient to ſuppoſe, that "the Heretic, with whom "he refuſed to bath him"ſelf, was cruſhed to pieces "by the fall of the houſe." Vid. Artic. CERINTHUS, Not. D. in Dictionaire.

man:

man: and this preſſed upon all Chriſtians by the authority and example of *St. John* [1].

But I would aſk, whether a behaviour of this ſort be agreeable to the ordinary temper and ſpirit of the Goſpel, or of that *Jeſus*, who came into the world, as *a Phyſician to the ſick*; and in that character, ſought out *the Publican*, and *the Sinner*, for the opportunity of healing them; and preferred the *Hæretical Sadducee*, and *the Schiſmatical Samaritan*, to the *fierce Zealot*, and the *Orthodox Phariſee?* No, it is ſo far from being conformable to the ordinary rules of Chriſtian duty, that it was copied, as *Dr. Berriman* himſelf owns, from *the Jewiſh inſtitutes* [2]: as if it flowed from that principle, by which this ſame Apoſtle, while yet raw and unacquainted with the benevolent temper of his new religion, was calling down *fire from heaven on the Samaritans, after the example of Elias*, and was reproved accordingly by our Lord, *for not knowing what manner of ſpirit he was of* [3].

If I ſhould aſk theſe Gentlemen alſo, what it is, that they mean by the word *Hæretic*; we ſhould find in the end, that they meant nothing more by it, than one, who differed from them in any article of religion, which they held to be important. *Dr. Waterland* calls him, an *open Impugner of fundamentals*, and labours to prove, that we ought not to hold communion with any

[1] See Import. of the Doctr. of the Trin. c. iv. p. 122, &c.
[2] Sermon, Vol. ii. p. 351. [3] Luke ix. 55.

of

of that character [1]. And ſhould we aſk once more, *what are theſe fundamentals?* he would refer us without doubt in the firſt place to *the doctrine of the Trinity:* whence I have drawn the teſtimonies above aſcribed to him. *The importance of which* makes the ſubject of that very book; and this doctrine indeed is held ſo fundamental by the Papiſts, that the diſbelief of it, though but ſecretly entertained by a Prieſt, is declared to annull the whole efficacy of his miniſtry, and of the Sacraments themſelves, not onely to himſelf, but to all others, how innocent ſoever, to whom he ſhould happen to adminiſter them. But among Proteſtants, the diſtinction of fundamentals, has been conſtantly applied to thoſe doctrines alone, which are clearly and preciſely delivered in the holy Scriptures: and how far this character will ſuit with the doctrine of the Trinity, I leave to others to determine: yet this, I think, we need not ſcruple to ſay, that it is no where expreſly declared by any of the earlieſt Fathers; and as the moſt learned among the Papiſts aſſert, was never affirmed or taught by the Church, before the Council of *Nice* [2].

Irenæus, ſpeaking of the Moſaic diſtinction of animals into *clean and unclean*, ſays; "the law "foretold all theſe things figuratively, by ani- "mals denoting men: thoſe, which divide the "hoof and chew the cud, it pronounces clean: "thoſe, which do neither, unclean. Who then

[1] Import. &c. c. iv. § 18, 33.

[2] See Chillingw. Pref.

"are

" are clean? thoſe, who go on firmly, believing " *in the Father and in the Son. For this is the* " *firmneſs of thoſe, who have the double hoof* [1]."
Hence we ſee, that the fundamental doctrine, or the firmneſs of the Chriſtian faith, in this early age was, to believe in *the Father and in the Son.* In the ages next following, many different opinions ſucceſſively prevailed, and were held orthodox in their turns: but as ſoon as the *Arian* controverſy began to diſturb the peace of the Church, *Conſtantine the Great* wrote a letter, in common to *Arius* and *Alexander* Biſhop of *Alexandria*, the oppoſite chiefs in the diſpute, in which he treats the whole quæſtion, " as vain, " fooliſh, and impertinent; as a diſpute of " words without ſenſe, which none could ex- " plane, nor any comprehend; as the fruit of " idleneſs and leiſure miſemployed, which no " way affected the ſumm of religion; and that " to quarrel about ſuch trifles and ſubtleties, " was childiſh, and below the gravity of Prieſts; " wherefore he earneſtly exhorts them to put " an end to ſo ſilly a conteſt, productive " of nothing but quarrels and blaſphemies " among the people; and to return to their " former friendſhip and communion with each " other."

This letter was ſent by *Hoſius*, a learned and venerable Biſhop; chiefly intruſted by the Emperor in the affairs of the Church; and is com-

[1] Iren. l. v. c. 8.

mended

mended both by *Euſebius* and *Socrates*, as *excellent, admirable, and full of wiſdom* [1]. Which ſhews, what was the opinion both of the Church and the State, with regard to this quæſtion, or *parting point*, as *Dr. Waterland* calls it, before the Council of *Nice*.

But to return to our ſtory of *St. John* and *Cerinthus*. If we allow it to be true, the conduct of *St. John* cannot be conſidered in any other light, than as an extraordinary caſe, or the effect of that divine power, which was peculiar to the Apoſtles, and ceaſed with the Apoſtolic age; by which they were inabled to penetrate the hearts of men, and diſcern the ſecret motives, that actuated thoſe early corruptors of the Chriſtian faith. *Epiphanius*, as I have already intimated, declares it to have been ſuggeſted by a ſpecial inſpiration. It is abſurd therefore, to propoſe an act, directed by an extraordinary commiſſion from heaven, as a rule of proceding in ordinary caſes: and it would make wild work among us, for weak and fallible men to revive and exerciſe a diſcipline, which was grounded on infallibility; and to pretend to judge, with an Apoſtolic authority, of the hearts and ſpirits of their fellow Chriſtians, without the Apoſtolic gift of diſcerning thoſe ſpirits; yet this is one of the principal points, which is preſſed by *Dr. Waterland*, through his whole treatiſe on *the Importance of the Doctrine of the Trinity*.

[1] Vid. Euſeb. Vit. Conſtant. l. ii. c. 64, &c. it. Socrat. Hiſt. Eccleſ. l. i. c. 7.

The ſame Doctor however, on a different occaſion, where he is vindicating the morality of certain acts, related of the antient Prophets and other pious men in the Old Teſtament, declares, "that ſuch facts of an extraordinary "kind, which were the immediate effects of a "divine impulſe, are not recorded as examples "of common practice, nor to be warranted in "common men, unleſs ſpecially authoriſed in "the ſame manner, as thoſe Prophets were." The caſe is the ſame with regard to the Apoſtles: the ſevere cenſures, which they ſometimes paſſed on Hæretics, and other wicked men, being the ſuggeſtions of a divine ſpirit, ought not to be drawn into precedent, but by the direction of the ſame ſpirit: for otherwiſe, the peace of the Church would neceſſarily be diſturbed by perpetual ſchiſms and quarrels, and its beſt members, through the clamor and rage of a few zealots, often treated as the worſt. Every man's experience will furniſh inſtances, of the wretched fruits of this zeal, in the bigoted, vicious, and ignorant part, both of the Clergy, and the Laiety; who puffed with the pride of an imaginary orthodoxy, and deteſting all free inquiry, as dangerous to their eaſe, and ſure to expoſe their ignorance, take pleaſure in defaming and inſulting men of learning, candor, and probity, who happen to be touched with any ſcruples, or charged with any opinions, which they think fit to call Hæretical.

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The very learned and pious Biſhop *Tailor*, ſpeaking of this very ſtory, ſays; *It is a good precedent for us, when the caſe is equal. St. John could diſcern the ſpirit of Cerinthus; and his hæreſy was notorious, fundamental, and highly criminal; and the Apoſtle, a perſon aſſiſted up to infallibility.* It is this character then of Infallibility, which alone can warrant us in copying the pretended act of the Apoſtle; for unleſs we be poſſeſſed of this, the caſe can never be equal: and the ſole inference, which we can reaſonably draw in the mean time, from *St. John's* behaviour towards *Cerinthus*, as well as towards the Thief, above-mentioned, is; that by his power of diſcerning ſpirits, he knew the Hæretic to be a profligate and determined enemy of the Chriſtian faith; and the Thief, to be a good-natured youth, who, through the giddineſs of his age, and the contagion of bad company, had been drawn inconſiderately into a raſh and deſperate frolic. But to propoſe this caſe, as a teſt or ſtanding proof of the *ſuperior iniquity of Hæreſy, above the groſſeſt immorality*; of its being more abominable than robbery, or in ſome caſes, as we are told [1], than even *felony or treaſon*, is certainly dangerous to ſociety; tending to turn men's heads with fanaticiſm; and to introduce violent and ſanguinary procedings in the affair of religious differences.

For what elſe is it, that has given birth to all thoſe murthers and maſſacres, which Hæretics

[1] Import. of the Doctr. of the Trin. p. 218.

have ſo often ſuffered in all thoſe countries, where this doctrine has ever prevailed, and to which they ſtand expoſed at this day, wherever it ſtill prevails? the effect is natural and unavoidable: for if robbery and treaſon be crimes ſo intolerable to ſociety, that it is neceſſary to puniſh them with death, it follows of courſe, that crimes, more odious ſtill both to God and man, muſt deſerve a ſeverer treatment; by the addition of racks, tortures, and fires, which are all therefore actually applied in ſuch caſes, by every Chriſtian nation, perſuaded of the truth of this ſame principle.

Our Divines indeed take pains to diſclame the charge of Popiſh cruelty, and profeſs to mean nothing more, than the neceſſity *of ſpiritural cenſures*. They tell us, that piety to God, charity to man, juſtice to ourſelves require the exerciſe of ſuch cenſures: *That it is fervent charity, though expreſſed in an harſher way; ſince palliating medicines would be cruel, where corroſives are the onely means of cure* [1]. But all this is a mere fallacy, and the very cant of the Romiſh Inquiſitors; who make the ſame pretence of piety, charity, and juſtice, without a grain of them in any of their proceedings, and in the very exerciſe of ſuch barbarities, as are ſhocking to humanity itſelf [2].

[1] See Import. of the Doctr. of the Trin. p. 133.

[2] Sanctæ Inquiſitionis paternam curam — plenam charitatis inſtructionem. Ant. de Domin. Conſil. redit. p. 23.

Dr.

Dr. Waterland however ſays, *That Divines may ſtill deſire, that ſuch offenders may live to repent, rather than ſuffer death or civil penalties.* But what if they ſhould not repent? why then, *they periſh*, he ſays, *with their eyes open, and may take the blame to themſelves* [1]. And in truth, all ſpiritual juriſdiction, whether in Popiſh or Proteſtant hands, muſt of courſe terminate in civil penalties; ſince it would be contemptible without them, and unable to inforce its own cenſures. But ſince civil puniſhments for ſpeculative opinions, if openly and profeſſedly clamed, might be ſhocking to a free nation, it is artful to evade that odium, by beginning at the other end, and to eſtabliſh the thing more ſecurely, by ſeeming to diſavow it. But it is certain, that there is very little difference between Proteſtant and Popiſh tyranny, if a liberty be not allowed to private judgement in all ſpeculative opinions, without reſtraint, or fear of puniſhment, on any other account, than of its being exerciſed unſeaſonably and intemperately to the diſturbance of the ſtate.

On the whole; it appears, I think, from what is ſaid above, 1ſt, That this hearſay-ſtory concerning *St. John* and *Cerinthus*, is at the beſt of ſo uncertain and doubtful a credit, that we cannot reaſonably lay any ſtreſs, or ground any point of duty upon it. 2dly, That if we ſhould grant it even to be true, it

[1] Ibid. p. 218, 219.

would be abſurd and dangerous to the peace of the Church, in its preſent circumſtances, to eſtabliſh it as a rule of conduct, to private and ordinary Chriſtians.

ESSAY

ESSAY

ON THE

Allegorical and Literal INTERPRETATION

OF THE

CREATION and FALL of MAN.

ON

Allegorical Interpretation, *etc.*

IT is a principle conſtantly laid down by all the Expoſitors of Sacred Writ, that every part of it muſt be expounded in ſuch a manner, as to render it conſiſtent with reaſon, and the known attributes of the Deity; and whatever will not admit of that interpretation, cannot be received, as of divine authority. If this be true, it follows, that our notion of God and his Attributes, is not to be drawn originally from the Scriptures, but from nature and reaſon, previouſly to our ſtudy of Scriptures, which otherwiſe would be apt to lead us into dangerous errors. *He who cometh to God*, ſays the Apoſtle, *muſt believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of thoſe who diligently ſeek him* [1]. It would be abſurd, to make the divine Attributes the rule of interpreting Scripture, and yet to take our notion of thoſe Attributes from the ſame Scripture: for that would confound the rule, with the thing to be tried by it: and like travelling in a circle, inſtead of carrying us forward, would bring us onely to the point, from which we ſet out. The want of attention to this maxim, and the raſhneſs of interpreting

[1] Heb. xi. 6.

the

the Sacred books, without any juſt conception of the Deity, has given birth to all thoſe ſenſeleſs doctrines and Hæreſies, which have diſturbed and diſgraced the Chriſtian Church in all ages.

For example; the literal acceptation of *the Moſaic Hiſtory of the Creation and fall of man*, by its ſeeming inconſiſtency with the characters of the divine wiſdom and goodneſs, induced certain Hæretics of the Primitive Church, to aſſert *the exiſtence of two Gods, or independent principles; the one evil, the Creator of the world, and God of the Old Teſtament; the other good, the ſupreme God and Father of Jeſus* [1]; while the ſame method of interpreting induced other *ſimpler Chriſtians* alſo, as *Origen* tells us, *who honored the Creator, and thought nothing ſuperior to him, to aſcribe ſuch things to him, as they would not believe of the moſt cruel and unjuſt of men* [2]. But neither thoſe early Hæretics, nor ſimple Chriſtians, could have fallen into ſuch groſs errors, if they had previouſly conceived and fixed in their minds, any rational notion of the nature of God. And in truth, there is not any part of the holy Scriptures, that has ſo much exerciſed the wit and invention of the Commentators, as this very Hiſtory of the Creation, by the difficulty of reconciling it to the allowed attributes of the Creator.

I ſhall not enter into a particular examination

[1] Iren. l. i. c. 28, 29. Origen. Philocal. c. i. p. 6, 7, 21. Tertull. Præſcr. Hæret. 40. [2] Orig. ibid. p. 7.

of

of all their various expoſitions: ſome of them will fall in our way in the courſe of this argument. All that I propoſe at preſent, is, to compare onely in general, the ſeveral merits of the two principal and rival kinds of interpretation, the one according to the Letter, the other to Allegory, which have each of them been approved and preferred in their turns, in different ages of the Church.

By the Letter, I mean the Hiſtorical acceptation of the text, as a plain narrative of facts, ſuppoſed to have been tranſacted in the very manner and order in which they are there related: by Allegory, I mean that latent and more refined way of delivering truth, under the dreſs of fiction, or fable, which was practiſed chiefly in ancient times, and by the Sages of the Eaſtern world.

Clemens of *Alexandria*, one of the moſt learned and inquiſitive of all the Primitive Fathers, declares, "that all, who treat of Theology, whe-
"ther Greeks or Barbarians, have ever indu-
"ſtriouſly involved the beginnings of things,
"by delivering the truth in *ænigma's*, *ſymbols*,
"and *allegories*. That this *ſymbolical* manner
"of inſtruction was in particular eſteem with
"the *Hebrews* as well as the *Ægyptians*, and that
"the *Greeks* borrowed it from *Moſes*. That
"truth, under this veil of allegory, carries a
"more awful and majeſtic form. And that this
"kind of interpretation was of all others the
"moſt uſeful to true Theology, and piety, and

"the

" the ſure proof of a ſuperior wiſdom and un-
" derſtanding [1]."

Euſebius obſerves, " that the *Jews* were of
" two ſorts, the learned and unlearned: that the
" latter of theſe, or the multitude, were ſubject-
" ed by *Moſes* to the literal obſervation of his
" laws, as delivered in words: but the men of
" ſtronger minds were freed from that ſubjec-
" tion, and trained to a more divine philoſo-
" phy, and to penetrate into the hidden mean-
" ing. Agreeably to which diſtinction, he ſays,
" that they had public readers, or interpreters,
" called *Deuterotæ*, who explaned the recondite
" and ænigmatical ſenſe, not promiſcuouſly to
" all, but to ſuch onely as were qualified to re-
" ceive it." All which he confirms by the au-
thority of *Philo* and *Ariſtobulus*, and the con-
ſtant practice of the *Eſſenes*, who followed this
figurative manner of expounding, which, even
in thoſe days, was called ancient [2].

On the other hand, it is certain, that the lite-
ral interpretation of the firſt chapters of *Geneſis*,
has been a perpetual ſource of doubts and diffi-
culties to the beſt Commentators; and of rail-
lery and ridicule to the enemies of revealed reli-
gion in all ages. *Celſus*, the old adverſary of the
Goſpel, laughs at the ſtory *of Adam's formation*,

[1] Stromat. l. v. p. 658, 673, 679. it, l. ii. 429, &c. Edit. Oxon.

[2] Præpar. Evangel. l. viii. x. xi. it. l. xi. v. This *Ariſtobulus* is ſuppoſed to be the ſame perſon, who is praiſed in the 2d book of the *Maccabees*, c. 1, x.

and

and of Eve made from his rib; of God's commands to them both; and of the Serpent oppoſing and eluding the effect of thoſe commands, as an abſurd old woman's tale: where *Origen*, in anſwer to him, obſerves, *that he does not act fairly, but diſſembles, what he ought to have ſignified, that all this was to be underſtood in an allegorical ſenſe; not giving his reader the words themſelves, which would have put him in mind that they were ſpoken figuratively.* Yet *Celſus* himſelf owns, on another occaſion, *that the reaſonable and moderate both of the Jews and Chriſtians were aſhamed of theſe ſtories, and endeavoured to turn them into an Allegory* [1].

Origen retorts likewiſe his own cavils upon him, by ſhewing, "that there were much ſillier "ſtories among their own writers, both Poets "and Philoſophers, of which he gives ſeveral "inſtances from *Heſiod* and *Plato*, which were "all allegorized by their interpreters to a moral "ſenſe; and he urges it as unreaſonable, to de-"ny to the Jews, and to their Legiſlator *Moſes*, "what was allowed to all other nations, *the poſ-"ſeſſion of truth under the veil of myſtery* [2]:" in which reaſoning he purſued the principles of his maſter *Clemens*. *Julian* alſo, after rallying, as *Celſus* had done, the particular articles of the ſame ſtory, ſays, *that unleſs it be conſidered as a fable, of a ſecret and myſtical ſenſe, it is full of great blaſphemies againſt God* [3].

[1] Cont. Celſ. p. 186, 187. [2] Ibid. l. iv. p. 189.
[3] Julian Oper. & Cyril. contr. Vol. ii. l. iii. p. 93, 94. Ed. Lipſ.

It is commonly objected by the Naturaliſts, that the *Moſaic* account of the creation, if conſidered onely according to the letter, cannot poſſibly be reconciled to phyſical truth, or to the nature of things. *Euſebius* ſays in excuſe for it, *that it was not Moſes's intention, to give a philoſophical account of the formation of the world, but to ſignify onely, that it did not exiſt of itſelf or by chance, but was the production of an all wiſe and all powerful Creator* [1]. *Cyril* makes the ſame reply to the ſcoffs of *Julian*, *that Moſes's view was, to accommodate his ſtory to the ignorance of the Jews; not to reaſon accurately on the origin of things, but to ſhew, that there was one God who created them all* [2]. Others, who contend for the neceſſity of allegory, are more ſevere upon the literal meaning.

Philo calls it *a piece of ruſtic ſimplicity, to imagine, that God really employed the labor of ſix days in the production of things* [3]: in which he is followed by *Origen*, *Auſtin*, *Ambroſe*, &c. "What "man in his ſenſes, ſays *Origen*, will believe, "that the firſt, ſecond, and third days, and the "evenings and mornings paſſed without ſun, "moon, and ſtars? and the firſt even without "the heavens? who ſo ſilly as to think, that "God, like an huſbandman, planted a garden, "and in it a real tree of life, to be taſted by "corporeal teeth; or that the knowledge of "good and ill was to be acquired by eating the

[1] Præpar. Evangel. l. ii. 7. [2] Vid. Julian. Oper. ibid. p. 50. [3] Vid. Sixt. Senenſ. Biblioth. l. v. p. 338.

"fruit

" fruit of another tree? And as to God's walk-
" ing in that garden, and *Adam's* hiding himſelf
" from him among the trees, he ſays, no man
" can doubt but that theſe things are to be tak-
" en figuratively, and not literally, to denote
" certain myſteries or recondite ſenſes."

He contends alſo, that in ſome parts of the *Moſaic* hiſtory, " there are interſperſed certain " abſurdities or impoſſibilities, on purpoſe to " draw us away from the mere pleaſure of the " narration, leſt by finding nothing in it worthy " of God, we might apoſtatize from the true " doctrine, and being unmoved by the letter, " learn nothing divine from it [1]."

It would be tedious to collect the ſtrange variety of conceits, which have been invented, about the ſingle article of a Paradiſe. One main argument againſt the reality of it is, the ignorance in which all ages have been, concerning its place and ſituation. Its being guarded ſo ſtrictly by a *Cherubim and flaming ſword*, if it be underſtood literally, neceſſarily implies, that, after the expulſion of *Adam*, it was acceſſible ſtill to man. Yet, if it had actually ſubſiſted in any part of the Eaſtern world, it is hard to conceive, why, from the time of *Adam's* expulſion, there ſhould not be the leaſt mention of its place or ſituation, in the records of thoſe Antediluvian ages: ſince *Adam* himſelf was not probably far removed from it; and his poſterity at leaſt, upon their increaſe and diſperſion from

[1] Orig. Philocal. c. i. p. 12, 13.

each

each other, muſt needs have been planted and ſettled on all ſides of it.

After the deluge indeed, and the univerſal change, which is ſuppoſed to have been made by it on the ſurface of the earth, it is not ſtrange, that its place and remains could not any where be diſcovered, notwithſtanding all the pains, inquiries, and even voyages of the curious in queſt of it: among whom I find none ſo adventurous as an Abbot of our own Iſland, named *Brandanus*, who is celebrated in Monkiſh ſtory, for ſailing round the world in ſearch of it [1]. Yet it is certain, that it could never have been in any part of this terreſtrial globe, if what the Primitive Fathers declare concerning it be true, that it was the place, *into which Enoch and Elias were tranſlated, and into which St. Paul alſo was caught up, in the third heaven*: which *Irenæus* affirms, *to have been taught by the Apoſtles, and delivered to him by thoſe ancient men, who had been their diſciples* [2].

But there is not a ſingle article of this narrative of the Creation, which, in its literal ſenſe, has not puzzled all the expoſitors, and furniſhed the Sceptics with perpetual topics of ridicule. In anſwer to whom, I have never met with one advocate of the letter, either ancient or modern, who has ventured to affirm the whole to be rational and natural; or has not been forced to

[1] Chytr. Onomaſtic. Bibl. p. 798. [2] Iren. l. v. c. 5. p. 405. vid. not. 4.

take

take ſhelter under Allegory, in one part of it or the other.

Joſephus, in the Præface of his Jewiſh Antiquities, tells us, "that their Legiſlator, *Moſes*, "had dexterouſly involved ſome things in ænig-"ma's, delivered others with dignity in Alle-"gories, and literally explaned, whatever was "proper to be directly propoſed: which to "thoſe, who are diſpoſed to ſearch into the cau-"ſes of each, will afford much contemplation, "and of a kind truly philoſophical. That the "purpoſe of his Antiquities was, to ſet forth "onely the literal and hiſtorical part; but if "God prolonged his life, he would endeavour "to explane the other parts alſo." And in the firſt chapter of his book, he clearly ſignifies, "that the ſtory of the Creation was of the alle-"gorical kind:" for after a brief abſtract of the firſt day's work, given in the words of *Moſes*, he adds, "I could now explane the cauſe of "this, but ſince I have promiſed to give the "cauſes of all in a ſeparate volume, I will de-"fer the interpretation of it to that time [1]."

Philo actually performed what *Joſephus* promiſed; and has largely explaned all the allegories of the Moſaic law; and, in a particular treatiſe *on the formation of the world, according to Moſes's* account of it, he ſays, "theſe are not "fabulous tales, ſuch as the poetic and ſophiſtic "tribe delight in, but figurative deſcriptions, "leading us to allegorical and recondite ſenſes;

[1] Vid. Antiqu. Jud. Procem. &c. i. p. 5. Edit. Havere.

"to

" to which, if any one rightly and rationally at-
" tends, he will aptly call the ſerpent the em-
" blem of pleaſure. Firſt, becauſe, being with-
" out feet, he lays his whole ſtreſs upon his
" belly: 2dly, becauſe he makes the clods of
" earth his food: 3dly, becauſe he carries poi-
" ſon in his teeth, which deſtroys all who are
" bit by him: all which noxious qualities be-
" long alſo to the voluptuous man [1]."

St. *Auſtin*, in the preface to his twelve books, of *the literal interpretation* of the three firſt chapters of *Geneſis*, ſays, "the quæſtion is, whether
" all theſe things are to be underſtood onely in
" a figurative ſenſe, or to be embraced and de-
" fended by the rule of hiſtorical faith, as things
" which were really tranſacted. For that they
" are not to be underſtood figuratively, no
" Chriſtian will dare to ſay, who recollects,
" that the Apoſtle declares, *how all thoſe things*
" *happened to them in a figure*, and recommends
" that which is written in *Geneſis*, *theſe two ſhall*
" *be one fleſh*, as a great myſtery, relating to
" Chriſt and the Church [2]." On the ſubject of *Paradiſe* alſo, he tells us, " that there were
" three opinions about it, which were in a man-
" ner general: one of thoſe, who interpreted it,
" of a corporeal or material *Paradiſe*: another
" of thoſe, who underſtood it onely, of a ſpiri-

[1] De Opific. Mundi Secund. Moyſ. Op. T. i. p. 38. Ed. Lond.

[2] Nam non eſſe accipienda figuraliter, nullus Chriſtianus dicere audebit, &c. De Geneſ. ad literam, l. i. c. 1.

" tual one: and a third of thoſe, who conſidered " it in both thoſe ſenſes; ſometimes in a cor- " poreal and ſometimes in a ſpiritual; and this " third opinion, he ſays, was that which pleaſed " him [1]." Wherefore, after he had given the allegorical interpretation in another part of his writings, he profeſſes in theſe twelve books, to explane the ſame things, according to their hiſtorical truth; yet, even here, is frequently driven back again to Allegory, or as oft as he found himſelf unable, he ſays, *to accommodate the text to a proper and literal ſenſe* [2].

But this double way of interpreting, which *Auſtin* here approves, and the Moderns generally follow, by conſidering one ſentence as literal, the next as allegorical; one part as a fact, the next as a fable; ſeems to be abſurd and irrational; tending rather to confound than inlighten the underſtandings of men; and was contrived, without doubt, for no other purpoſe, but the ſupport of ſyſtems and prejudices, which plain ſcripture would not juſtify, till it was dreſſed up and ſeaſoned, as it were, by a mixture of ſenſes which did not belong to it. Fables indeed may be grounded on things real and true: and a

[1] Tres tamen de hac re quaſi generales ſunt ſententiæ, &c. Ibid. l. viii. c. 1.

[2] Et quia non mihi tunc occurrebant omnia, quemadmodum proprie poſſent accipi, magiſque non poſſe accipi videbantur. aut vix poſſe, aut difficile; &c.—Ib. l. viii. c. 2.

Tota iſta ſententia figurata eſt. Ib. l. xiii. c. 36.

Hæc quoque in mulierem verba Dei, figurate & prophetice multo commodius intelliguntur. Ib. c. 37.

general notion of ſuch truths may be artfully conveyed under the veil of fiction or Allegory: but hiſtorical and allegorical narrations are compoſitions of quite different kinds, and ſerving to different ends: the one to repreſent, by a literal deſcription, the true and natural ſtate of things; the other, to inculcate ſome hidden truth, quite different from what it literally repreſents. It ſeems impoſſible, therefore, that two ſuch oppoſite characters, which naturally deſtroy each other, can belong to the ſame ſubject; or that one and the ſame deſcription can, by any art or mixture of ſenſes, be rendered both truly hiſtorical and allegorical at the ſame time.

From theſe authorities and reflections, I have ever been inclined to conſider the particular ſtory of *the fall of man*, as a moral fable or allegory; ſuch as we frequently meet with in other parts, both of the Old and New Teſtament, in which certain religious duties and doctrines, with the genuin nature and effects of them, are repreſented as it were to our ſenſes, by a fiction of perſons and facts which had no real exiſtence. And I am the more readily induced to eſpouſe this ſenſe of it, from a perſuaſion, that it is not onely the moſt probable and rational, but the moſt uſeful alſo to the defence of our religion, by clearing it of thoſe difficulties, which are apt to ſhock and make us ſtumble, as it were, at the very threſhold.

For whether we interpret the ſtory literally or allego-

allegorically, I take it to be exactly the ſame, with regard to its effects and influence on Chriſtianity; which requires nothing more from it, than what is taught by both the kinds of interpretation, *That this world had a beginning and creation from God; and that its principal inhabitant, man, was originally formed to a ſtate of happineſs and perfection, which he loſt and forfeited, by following his luſts and paſſions, in oppoſition to the will of his Creator.* For there could not be any religion at all, without the belief of ſuch a Creator, nor any need of a reveled religion, but upon the ſuppoſition of man's fall. Theſe two points, then, as the ancients obſerved, are all that *Moſes* propoſed to deliver to us; and they are delivered with equal truth and efficacy, either in the literal or the allegorical way: nor do I find any reference to them in the ſacred Scriptures, which appears to be inconſiſtent with the allegorical acceptation of them.

Have ye not read, ſays our Saviour to the *Phariſees, that he who made them at the beginning, made them male and female? and for this cauſe ſhall a man leave his Father and Mother, and cleave to his wife, and they twain ſhall be one fleſh* [1]. He takes no notice of the particular manner of *Eve's* formation, from the rib of *Adam*; but intimates onely in general the fact of their creation and the moral of it, which is equally deducible from the literal and the allegorical ſenſe. St. *Paul* ſeems to allude indeed to the circum-

[1] Matt. xix. 4. Mark x. 6.

ſtance of the rib, where he ſays, *that the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man: and that Adam was firſt formed, and then Eve* [1]: whence he infers the ſubordination of the female ſex. But his argument, whether it be drawn from the letter or the allegory, would have the ſame force, ſince it is ſuppoſed, that the allegory itſelf was contrived for the purpoſe of ſuggeſting the ſame inference. Again, *I fear*, ſays *Paul* to the *Corinthians*, *leſt, as the ſerpent beguiled Eve, through his ſubtilty, ſo your minds ſhould be corrupted from the ſimplicity that is in Chriſt* [2]. Where he ſeems to unfold the true meaning and hidden ſenſe of the *Moſaic* parable, and to ſignify, that *Eve* was beguiled and ſeduced from her native ſimplicity, by the carnality of her luſts and affections. For as that was certainly the caſe of the *Corinthians*, ſo the Apoſtle's ſimile would not be pertinent, unleſs we take the ſerpent, as many of the learned have done, to be the *ſymbol of luſt and ſenſual pleaſure*.

The book of *Job*, according to the moſt probable opinion, is nothing elſe but a kind of *Fable*, or *Poetic Drama*; deſigned to inculcate the certainty of a divine Providence; the duty of patience in afflictions, and of ſubmiſſion to the will of God under all his diſpenſations, how ſevere or afflicting ſoever they may happen to be. This was the ſenſe of the moſt ancient and learned *Jews*, who had no clear account or probable tradition concerning either *Job* himſelf,

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 8. [2] 2 Cor. xi. 3.

or

or the author of the book: which ſome impute to *Moſes*, ſome to *David*, ſome to *Iſaiah*, or to one of the later Prophets; while others ſuppoſe it to have been written after *the Babyloniſh captivity:* yet all of them ſeem to think, that *Job* himſelf, if ſuch a man ever really exiſted, muſt have lived in the times of the Patriarchs. But, be that as it will, it is evident, that every part of the book breathes a dramatic and fabulous air: *the council of Angels convoked by God; the appearance of Satan among them; his debate with God, and commiſſion received from him; the ſeveral ſpeeches of Job and his friends:* the concluſion of the whole, by the apparition of God himſelf in a whirlwind; and all this, as the critics obſerve, delivered in verſe, make it highly probable, or certain rather, that it was intended, as I have ſaid, for an inſtructive or *moral Drama.* Yet we find it referred to, and applied by *Ezechiel* and St. *James*, in the ſame manner as if it were a real hiſtory [1]; becauſe its moral or doctrinal part could not fail to have the ſame effect in the one way as in the other.

I cannot however omit one argument for the reality of its hiſtoric character, which was wanting, as I obſerved above, to the caſe of Paradiſe. For though the place of Paradiſe could never be diſcovered in any age, by the moſt laborious ſearches of the curious, yet St. *Chryſoſtom* aſſured us, "that it was common in his days "to undertake dangerous voyages by ſea, from

[1] Ezech. xiv. 14. Epiſt. Jam. v. 11.

"the

" the remoteſt parts of the earth, *to viſit Job's* " *dunghill in Arabia*, and, upon ſight of it, to " kiſs the ground, which that holy champion " had ſtained with the blood of his ulcers, more " precious than any gold; and from which they " received, he ſays, infinite benefit, and much " philoſophical inſtruction [1]."

The caſe is the ſame with the parables of our Saviour. For example; the parable of *Dives* and *Lazarus*, is delivered in ſo lively and affecting a manner, as to have given riſe to a diſpute, both among the ancients and the moderns, whether it be a fable or true hiſtory, or mixed and compounded of them both [2]. (But in what way ſoever it be taken, it yields the very ſame fruit to us:) and all the interpreters, from the time of its publication to this day, have been drawing from it, as from a real hiſtory, many excellent leſſons both of faith and practice. St. *Chryſoſtom*, in four ſeveral Homilies, harangues upon it, as a perpetual ſource of inſtruction to all conditions of men; and though he treats it as a proper parable, yet he makes this reflection on the whole, *That advice and admonition have the ſureſt effect, when we ſee the riotous chaſtiſed and puniſhed, not in words onely, but in fact and reality* [3].

To conclude; ſince it is allowed to have been the practice of all the ſages of the ancient world,

[1] Chryſoſt. Oper. T. ii. p. 59. Edit. Benedict.

[2] Non autem fabulam retulit nobis pauperis & divitis. Sed primum quidem docuit, neminem oportere deliciis uti, &c. Iren. l. iv. c. 3. Vid. Not. 2.

[3] Chryſoſt. T. i. 719.

in treating of the origin of things, and the ſublime doctrines of theology, to wrap up what they delivered, under the veil of *Ænigmas*, *Symbols*, and *Allegories*; and ſince this was more peculiarly the cuſtom of the *Egyptians*, among whom *Moſes* was born, and diligently trained *in all the myſterious parts of their learning and wiſdom*; it is reaſonable to imagine, that on the ſubject of the Creation, and the origin of man, he ſhould uſe a manner of writing, which all other nations then uſed, and which his maſters the *Egyptians* had particularly taught him. This, I ſay, is what we ſhould previouſly expect from ſuch a writer, on ſuch a ſubject; and this is what we find him to have actually performed, as it is evident, as well from the turn and manner of his writing, as from the teſtimony of thoſe very people, for whoſe inſtruction he wrote; who generally treat theſe firſt chapters of *Geneſis* as allegorical, and are ſaid to have reſtrained their youth from reading them, on account of the difficulties of the literal ſenſe, and the wrong notions which it might imprint of God, till they had reached a maturity of age and judgement, which might qualify them to comprehend its more recondite meaning. The Chriſtians alſo, when they received theſe books from the *Jews*, received from them at the ſame time, this ſame method of expounding, which they univerſally followed in the primitive ages: and on the authority of ſuch guides, it cannot ſurely be thought raſh, or give any juſt ſcandal, to adhere to the ſame interpretation;

tation; eſpecially, ſince it will be found, as I have ſaid above, the moſt effectual of all others, to clear our religion from thoſe objections, which in all ages have ſhocked the faith of many, on their very entrance into it.

End of the SECOND VOLUME.